'I'M NOT STUPID'

GARCI: YES, I TALKED WITH GMA

By Michael Lim Ubac

AFTER more than two weeks in hiding, Elections Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano broke his silence on the wiretapping controversy last night and denied in an exclusive telephone interview with the INQUIRER he conspired with President Macapagal-Arroyo to rig last year's balloting.

Garcillano also said he talked to a number of candidates in the last election. They include vice presidential candidate Loren

GARCI/ A18

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email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

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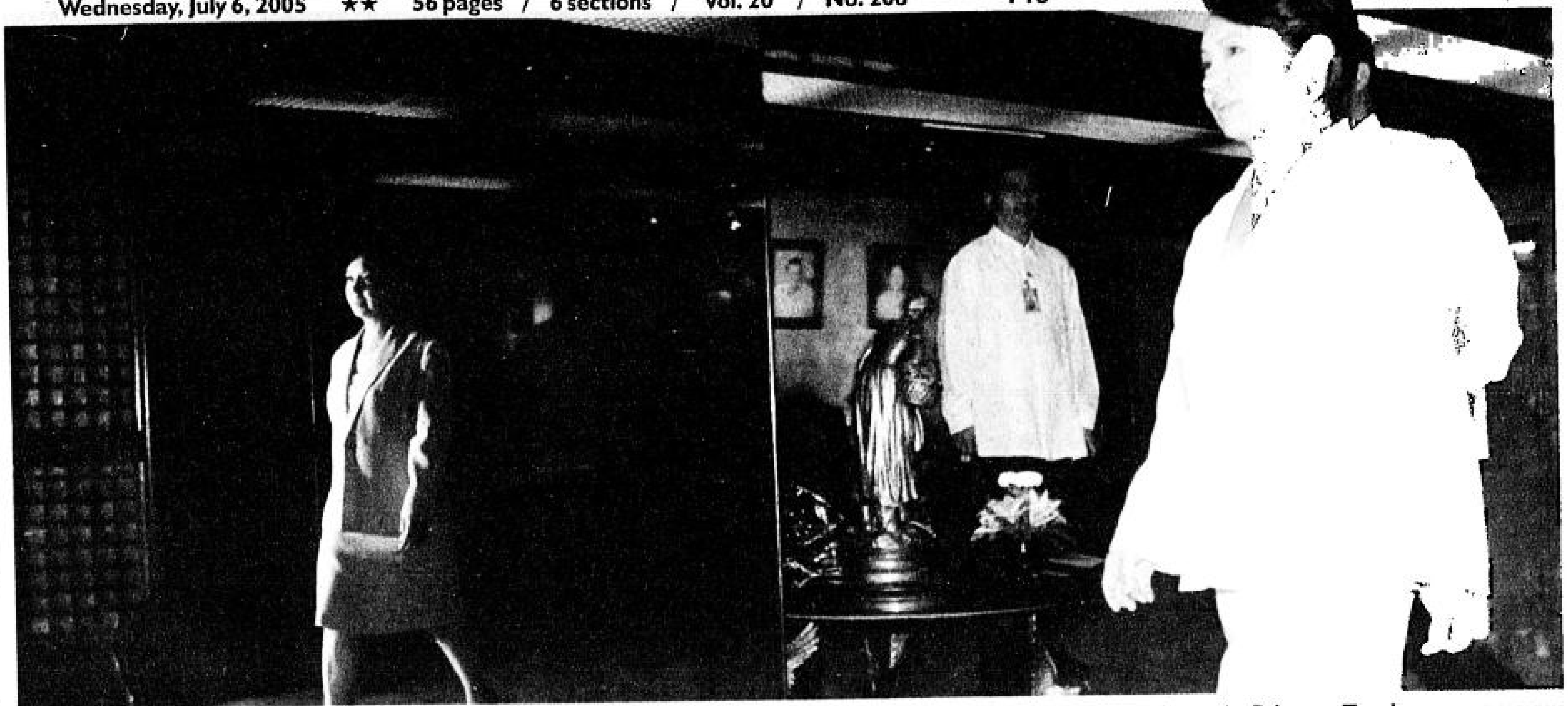
Biazon says young officers mad, planning mass leave

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

ALLEGATIONS that some generals meddled in the 2004 elections have prompted a group of young, idealistic officers to consider taking a mass leave or resigning from the military,

BIAZON/ A4



DOUBLE EXPOSURE: Mirror reflects President Arroyo taking everything in stride as she makes her way to yet another meeting at the Palace on Tuesday. EDWIN BACASMAS

RAFFY LERMA

THE "SOURCE" tapes, so called by lawyer Alan Paguia at the House of Representatives.

Cory, Rosales seek meeting with Noli

Are 'kingmakers' sizing up Vice President?

By TJ Burgonio and Michael L.Ubac

ARE THE "kingmakers" looking over Vice President Noli de Castro to check if he has "what it takes to lead this country?"

Former President Corazon C. Aquino and Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales sought a meeting with Vice President Noli de Castro yesterday reportedly to assess the crisis hounding President Macapagal-Arroyo, a highly reliable source told the INQUIRER.

But De Castro reportedly postponed the meeting as he had to leave for Hong Kong with his family to celebrate his 56th birthday today.

He has agreed to meet Aquino and Rosales tomorrow at an undisclosed place, the source told the INQUIRER.

The source hinted that Rosales, the successor of the late Jaime Cardinal Sin and Aquino, a key player in Edsa I and Edsa II, sought out the Vice President to discuss the growing clamor for the President's resignation over allegations of electoral fraud, and possibly, the "issue of succession."

De Castro is the President's constitutional successor. But the former TV broadcaster's capacity to perform the functions of a president and run the country, in case Ms Arroyo resigns, has been questioned by not a few sectors, especially members of the political opposition.

Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran said that De Castro also benefited from the electoral fraud allegedly perpetrated by the President in the May 2004 elections.

Beltran believes "the law of constitutional succession does not cover Mr. De Castro for this reason. Beyond this technical barrier, however, lies the inarguable truth that Mr. De Castro does not have what it takes to lead this country."

CORY/ A18

Enrile admits he also talked to poll execs

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

IN THE midst of suggestions that it was not just President Macapagal-Arroyo who talked to election officials during the 2004 balloting, Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile yesterday admitted he had done the same thing but did not think it was improper.

In the House, members of five committees jointly investigating the wiretapping controversy engaged in a lengthy debate before playing a three-hour long version of the recording presented by Alan Paguia, former lawyer of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

On Thursday, a 30-minute edited version of Paguia's "source" tapes was played in

ENRILE/ A18

GMA welcomes impeachment to rebut charges

By Christine O. Avendaño and Philip C. Tubeza

BRING it on.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said she would welcome impeachment so she could refute allegations that she cheated in last year's elections.

Ms Arroyo, fighting for survival amid a crisis that has roiled the financial markets, sparked street protests and triggered fears of military intervention, said through her press secretary she wanted the nation to calm down.

"Hopefully, this move (impeachment) will quiet down the political environment," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a statement.

Bunye said the impeachment was uncalled for and would just be a waste of time.

"But if this move is the only way to put a stop to the prevailing political grandstanding and mudslinging, then we welcome the move of Speaker (Jose) De Venecia if only to establish the proper constitutional venue," he said.

De Venecia has said he will ask the justice committee in the House of Representatives to tackle an impeachment complaint filed against Ms Arroyo late last month for breach of public trust.

The complaint was filed by lawyer Oliver Lozano who charged Ms Arroyo with betrayal of public trust following her wiretapped conversation with an election official at the height of the canvassing of votes. It was endorsed by Alagad party-list Rep. Rodante Marcolate.

Another impeachment complaint was filed against Ms Arroyo in the House of Representatives, and again, an administration lawmaker endorsed it.

Lawyer Rizalino Lazaro on Monday filed the second impeachment complaint against the President for betrayal of public trust. It was endorsed on the

GMA/ A18

Nene twits Joker: He's like a bat

By TJ Burgonio

SEN. Joker Arroyo's twitting of the opposition to file impeachment proceedings over the "Gloriagate" controversy has turned into a cat and bat slambang.

Breaking his silence on the scandal, Arroyo had scored last week's announcement by the National Democratic Front that the communist New People's Army was intensifying offensives in support of opposition efforts to unseat Ms Arroyo and form a council that will determine her replacement.

Instead, Arroyo said the opposition should have no fear of launching an impeachment trial, pointing out

NENE/ A6

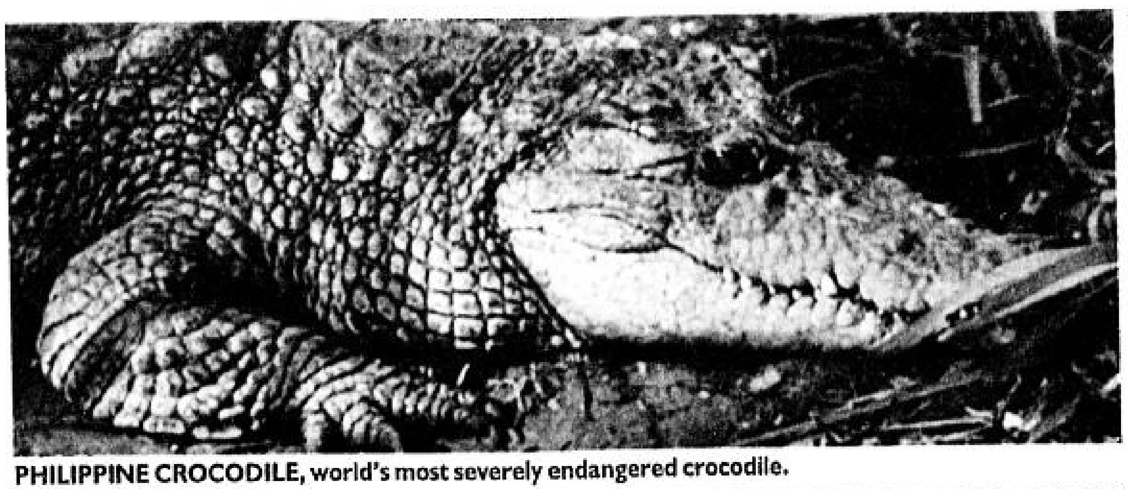
3 RP-based groups win int'l awards

By Christine Gaylican

THREE Philippine-based conservation groups whose efforts include saving the endangered Philippine crocodile, the Polillo Island monitor lizard and the Calayan rail, are among the 28 winners in the recently held 2005 BP Conservation Programme (BPCP).

The highest grant level of $75,000 or the Consolidation Award was awarded to each of three teams: The CROC Project in the Philippines for its work with the critically endangered Philippine crocodile (Crocodylus mindorensis), the Marsh Deer Project in Argentina, and the Vision 2005 Project which is working to promote sustain-

3 RP-BASED/ A5



PHILIPPINE CROCODILE, world's most severely endangered crocodile.

CALAYAN RAIL, rare flightless, bird species

MONITOR LIZARD (*bayawak*), endemic to Polillo Island.

UST calls for 'truth commission'

By Alcuin Papa and Christian V. Esguerra

THE UNIVERSITY of Sto. Tomas, the country's oldest university, is not about to demand President Macapagal-Arroyo's resignation. At least for now.

UST instead wants a "truth commission" to investigate allegations that Ms Arroyo tried to rig the 2004 presidential election as suggested by her wiretapped conversations with an election official, and to punish those who would be found guilty.

While UST bides its time, calls for the resignation of Ms Arroyo in the wake of the "Gloriagate" scandal are ringing in other schools.

The University of the Philippines Baguio has joined the clamor for Ms Arroyo to step down and for the people to explore political options

UST/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon will experience occasional rains and gusty winds. The rest of Luzon and Visayas will be cloudy with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread over the Western section. Mindanao will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY: CYRIL L. BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/07/06/05 SOURCE: PAGASA

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Second FRONTPAGE

Text us your feedback: inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy

SC advances VAT hearing

But TRO vs tax law stays

By Armand N. Nocum, Gil C. Cabacungan and TJ Burgonio

THE SUPREME Court yesterday moved to speed up the resolution of its decision to freeze the extended value added tax law amid businessmen's and legislators' concerns about the devastating impact of delayed E-VAT implementation on the country's international credit standing and the economy.

The SC did not lift its order freezing the law soon after its implementation last Friday, but said it was resetting the oral arguments on the merits of the petitions against the E-VAT from July 26 to July 14.

"That means the TRO remains and continues to be in effect," said lawyer Ismael Khan, chief of the SC public information office.

Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo, in a motion on behalf of respondents Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Finance Secretary Cesar V. Purisima and Internal Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr., on Monday sought the immediate lifting of the freeze order, saying it was costing the country P130 million in losses for each day that the E-VAT was not collected.

The motion also asked the SC to require the petitioners for the nullification of Republic Act 9337, or the E-VAT law, to post the bond represented by the daily losses.

'Expediting' the process

Khan said the decision meant the high court wanted to "expedite" the process and come out with an earlier decision on the issue.

"Because of the extreme importance of the case, the court moved the oral arguments to an earlier date," he said.

In its en banc resolution yesterday, the SC also asked the petitioners to comment on the government's motion within three days.

According to Khan, it will take the SC from 10 to 14 days after the conclusion of arguments before it comes out with a decision on the motion to lift the TRO or a ruling on the four petitions to nullify the law that opposition legislators, transport groups and petroleum dealers association had filed.

Unless the court were to require further arguments or memorandums from either parties, Khan said in a telephone interview.

Businessmen yesterday urged the Supreme Court to allow the E-VAT to be implemented on a selective basis, while freezing the provisions that the petitioners claimed were unconstitutional, mainly the provision giving the President "stand-by authority" to increase the VAT rate to 12 percent.

Francis Chua, president of the Federation of Filipino Chinese Chamber of Commerce, said that while the SC was hearing arguments on the issue, the government could proceed with the rest of the E-VAT, specifically the collection of VAT on electricity and fuel sales that was being counted on to generate the revenues needed to curb the budget deficit.

"The sharp fall in the peso and stock markets indicate how devastating the impact of the delayed E-VAT on the economy was. Investors are looking to the E-VAT to solve most of our fiscal problems," Chua said.

Legislators from both chambers of Congress, and from both administration and opposition camps, yesterday urged the SC to resolve the E-VAT issue quickly as it was "injurious" to the nation.

Peso plunge

"The plunge of the peso and stock market indicate that the uncertainty over the VAT law is not good for the economy," said Senate President Franklin Drilon.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile said the SC should not have stopped the application of the law but should have issued the injunction only when the President was about to exercise her standby power to raise the VAT rate.

"Can we stop the clock? Can we stop the drain on the finances of government? Can we stop the salaries of members of the Supreme Court? And the salaries of every clerk and janitor in the government? Can we stop the expenditure of public funds? Can we stop government?" he asked.

Sen. Sergio Osmeña said the SC's freeze order was giving the country a bad image abroad.

"It's not only uncertainty per se but it is also this reputation that we have been earning that you do not know what the law will be tomorrow because what you passed today could be changed tomorrow either by the same Congress or by the courts," he said.

House Representatives Edwin Uy and Isidoro E. Real Jr. said each day of delay in the lifting of the TRO was "a slow, excruciating death for the country."

CHEERS
President Macapaga-Arroyo tries to cheer up 8-year-old Princess Quilana (left) and 6-year-old Angelo Llanera, cancer patients who are undergoing chemotherapy treatment at the Philippine General Hospital. The President visited the pediatric cancer ward of the PGH yesterday.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Sandigan resets Garcia's arraignment

By Nelson F. Flores

THE SANDIGANBAYAN yesterday reset the scheduled arraignment of retired armed forces comptroller Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia who is facing multi-million plunder charges filed against him and his family.

The antigraft court's Second Division presided by Justice Edilberto Sandoval ordered the postponement since Garcia's motion to quash the indictment remains unresolved.

The new arraignment date has been reset to July 24.

The Ombudsman charged Garcia, his wife Clarita and sons Ian Carl, Juan Paolo and Timothy Mark with plunder, an offense punishable with death, after government prosecutors accused them of illegally amassing wealth amounting to at least P303.2 million.

Garcia is currently detained at the Philippine National Police headquarters in Camp Crame while his wife and three sons remain free.

According to Sandoval and the other members of the Second Division—Justices Francisco Villaruz and Rodolfo Ponferrada—Clarita and her sons could only be held as accomplices but not as principals.

The justices explained that the evidence submitted by the Ombudsman shows that Clarita and her sons were only "beneficiaries" but not among those who helped Garcia acquired the illegal wealth.

Meanwhile, erring graduates of the Philippine Military Academy would be disowned by their own mistahs if are found guilty of violating the academy's Code of Honor.

This was disclosed by retired Col. Mariano Santiago, PMA Alumni Association Ethics Committee chair, who has begun an investigation of Garcia's case.

He said other PMA alumni facing graft and corruption charges would also be investigated and given the appropriate sanctions if found guilty.

Santiago said Garcia, if found guilty by the committee, would lose all rights and privileges accorded by the association to its members which include the right to vote and be voted upon, and the right to medical, legal and financial assistance. He could also be reprimanded.

"But most of all he would lose the honor of being called an honorable son of the PMA," Santiago stressed.

The PMAAA is a non-political and religious organization of PMA graduates. In addition, graduates of foreign-service academies commissioned in the regular AFP forces, ex-PMA cadets who were discharged under honorable conditions and other officers who served in the PMA for at least two years are eligible for membership.

The PMAAA is chaired by retired Lt. Gen. Salvador Mison, a member of PMA Class of 1956.

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Abu Sayyaf kicked out of MILF turf

THE SEPARATIST Moro Islamic Liberation Front was up until last week coddling the Abu Sayyaf kidnap gang of Khadaffy Janjalani and members of the Jemaah Islamiyah regional terror group, a regional military commander alleged yesterday.

Maj. Gen. Agustin Dema-ala, commander of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said the MILF, which is in peace negotiations with the government, only asked the Janjalani group to leave the MILF turf last week.

He said the MILF wrote the Abu Sayyaf last Thursday, telling them to leave their camps and that they could no longer enter the MILF strongholds.

"They (MILF) used to coddle Janjalani," Dema-ala said in a chance interview at Camp Aguinaldo yesterday.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu denied the allegation.

"There was no coddling. We flushed them [Abu Sayyaf] out," he said in a phone interview.

Kabalu admitted the Janjalani group had briefly stayed near MILF-controlled territory in Duingolongan, Maguindanao but said the bandits were driven away.

Military troops are reportedly searching the Maguindanao towns of Upi and Talayan where the Abu Sayyaf groups was believed to have fled.

Dona Z. Pazzibugan

Lomibao puts love life on hold

By Luige A. del Puerto

IN THIS time of coup rumors and mass actions, and wiretapping and "jueteng" scandals, romance would have to take a back seat for the chief of the Philippine National Police chief—at least for now.

On his 55th birthday celebration yesterday, Director General Arturo Lomibao, now engaged to a speech writer of his former boss, said major "developments" in his personal life have been put on hold.

"None yet," he smiled when asked if a wedding was forthcoming now that he's 55. "How can I attend to a wedding when all these things are happening?"

Lomibao is facing allegations that he once acted as a protector of the illegal numbers game and that his visit to Mindanao in 2004 had something to do with the presidential election, which the opposition had claimed to have been rigged to favor President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Lomibao had denied the allegations.

Yesterday, he said he welcomed any inquiry so he could clear his name.

"I cannot focus on major events in my life... (I'll do it) one at a time," he said. And his love life? "Definitely, it has to be put aside in the meantime."

Lomibao, a widower, is engaged to Patricia Ann Cantero, the speech writer of former PNP chief Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. When Ebdane was chief, she often needed information from ranking officials, Lomibao among them.

Cantero, a single mother, had graced several official police functions, and every time she was around, Lomibao would introduce her as his partner.

When he assumed his office in March, the INQUIRER asked Lomibao if the PNP would see a rare moment—the wedding of its top official. He answered that a wedding was definitely in mind, but no date had been set yet.

But the last few weeks have been very bumpy, to say the least, for Lomibao.

On the day he assumed office, Abu Sayyaf detainees seized their jail in Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan. Week after week he faced a major issue—be it the killing of journalists, the gathering of world leaders in the capital, the murder of high-profile personalities in Metro Manila, the jueteng controversy, mass actions on the streets, or now, the wiretapping controversy.

At a time when controversies threaten to tear the country apart, Lomibao's birthday wish could not have been more apt—harmony and understanding among Filipinos.

"That there will be peace, harmony, understanding among all of us Filipinos. That's my birthday wish," he said.

Lomibao believes it was God's will to put him at the helm of the PNP at this time.

"I think (of them) as challenges, and with the help of our lord, I'm confident that I will rise to the challenge and weather all these challenges," he said.

He added: "Everything is the will of God."

Erap gives up on a comeback

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

HIS SUPPORTERS may still be dying to see him back in Malacañang but jailed former President Joseph Estrada has given up hopes of regaining his post.

Instead, he named actress Susan Roces, widow of his best friend Fernando Poe Jr., as the "new symbol and inspiration of the Filipino masses."

"(Roces) has given me and many many others the strength and encouragement to continue the crusade for truth and justice," he said in a statement yesterday.

He said he was also ready to support whoever would replace President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"I will unequivocally support whoever is destined to be the new and popular leader of our people," he said.

"I believe that the circumstances and events unfolding before us will define who this new leader will be," the deposed president added.

Though he joined calls for Ms Arroyo to step down, Estrada said he was longer interested in getting back his post.

"I am not after regaining the lost, stolen years of my legitimate presidency," he said.

Estrada was deposed in the so-called Edsa II in 2001 and is now detained and undergoing trial for plunder.

The deposed president said his only objective was "to see the upliftment of our masses from poverty and to see the deliverance of our (country) from the bondage of corruption, lawlessness and national shame perpetrated by the present regime under the leadership of a fake president," he said.

In his statement yesterday, Estrada maintained he just "took a leave of absence from the presidency."

His supporters earlier said Estrada was the perfect man to replace President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Citing the angry remarks of Roces during her press conference last week, National Coordinating Center for Volunteers spokesperson Linggoy Alcuaz said Poe's widow could be referring to Estrada as "the one."

"She is against snap elections. She also said in a television interview that the next president should be a man. But she is not for vice president Noli de Castro," Alcuaz said.

"Personally, I think Estrada fits the qualifications (Roces) mentioned," he added.

The deposed president was airlifted to the Cardinal Santos Medical Center in San Juan on Monday afternoon for a routine medical check up.

The Sandiganbayan gave him an initial five-hour medical leave after he complained of severe pains on his operated knee.

But his private doctor said Estrada needed to stay in the hospital until today because of bronchitis.

Why Susan Roces came out smoking

By Luige A. del Puerto

ACTRESS Susan Roces was bent on moving on with her life after the Supreme Court junked in April her petition to replace her late husband, Fernando Poe Jr., in his electoral protest. She had told friends to do the same.

But a series of events and the words of a 13-year-old boy finally convinced her to carry on her fight "for the truth."

"I think the man who sparked a flame (in us) was my grandpa, but he's gone now," Roces' confidant, Marichu Vera-Perez, quoted Roces' grandson Bryan as saying.

The conversation took place in the Poe residence in Greenhills in San Juan, the night after Ms Arroyo apologized to the nation for speaking with an election official.

"You know, it's the time like this that leaders are born. They are part of the flame of revolution, a peaceful revolution," the boy told them.

"(Grandma) is now the caretaker of that flame," Bryan said

Roces and other people who had heard Bryan broke into tears. Some 20 minutes later, Roces finally decided to push through with the press conference at the Club Filipino in San Juan the following day.

"You (Ms Arroyo) do not have the right to lead the people," declared Roces, once a picture of calm and sobriety.

"The gravest thing that you have done is that you have stolen the presidency, not once, but twice," an angry Roces said.

Abadia charged

FORMER Armed Forces chief Gen. Lisandro Abadia was charged yesterday with corruption before the Sandiganbayan for allegedly amassing cash and properties worth more than P11.2 million.

In a nine-page petition, the Office of the Ombudsman told the antigraft court that there was "more than a reasonable ground" to charge the former chief of staff and his wife Violeta.

Abadia is by far the highest ranking former military official charged with corruption under the government's campaign to rid the Armed Forces of crooked officials.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio and acting Deputy Special Prosecutor Humphrey Monteroso said the illegally-acquired wealth of Abadia during his incumbency was "manifestly out of proportion to his salary" and should be confiscated.

Records submitted to the Sandiganbayan showed that in 1986, Abadia's net worth was only about P2.2 million. It, however, grew to P13.2 million in 1993.

According to Villa-Ignacio, Abadia must "show cause" why the properties in question should not be confiscated if indeed they were all conjugal assets that have been acquired legally.

Records further showed that in 1992, Abadia said in his Statement of Assets and Liabilities and Net Worth that expenses he incurred and taxes paid totaled to P766,209, while his income for the same year amounted to P3.579 million.

His income, Abadia said, included proceeds from an alleged sale of a property for P2.550 million. He, however, failed to submit any proof of real estate transaction.

For the year 1993, Abadia claimed an income of P3.275 million to "partially justify" the enormous increase in his net worth. The reported amount of cash in his name almost doubled from P4.445 million in 1992 to P8.1 million in 1993, and he even acquired another property worth P5.5 million. *Nelson F. Flores, AFP*

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Mike A booked 2 flights to US and another to HK

By Nikko Dizon and Christine O. Avendano

TALK of elusiveness.

Last night, as of last count, First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo had made two bookings for a flight to the United States and a third booking for yet another trip to Hong Kong.

And no one at the airport knew which one he would be on.

Arroyo's departure has become a focus of attention among airport reporters since beleaguered President Macapagal-Arroyo last week announced her husband was uprooting himself from the country in order to remove people's doubts about her presidency.

But there was a total dearth of information on specifically when the First Gentleman would begin his "voluntary" separation from wife and children.

Even his lawyer and spokesperson, Jess Santos, yesterday said he did not know when his client was leaving and where he was heading to.

But Santos said that Arroyo was not expected to leave last night.

At least, the First Gentleman seemed to be monitoring the House inquiry on the tape scandal involving alleged wiretapped conversations between the President and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano.

'Congenital liar'

He issued a statement denying lawyer Allan Paguia's claim that the supposed recordings included a conversation in which Arroyo allegedly offered P1.5 million to Garcillano.

Arroyo called Paguia an "apathetic, congenital liar" and challenged him to "play in public that recording wherein I had supposedly made the offer, and to have the voice in that recording analyzed."

"I also challenge Atty. Paguia to repeat that malicious accusation outside the House of Representatives wherein he has no immunity, so that I can immediately sue him for criminal libel," the First Gentleman said.

He said he did not know where the office of Garcillano was and he had never met the commissioner's chief of staff, who was supposed to receive the money.

Booked on different flights

Regardless of when the First Gentleman is leaving, his elder son, Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, wife Angela and daughter Mikaela Gloria, at least are scheduled to leave for San Francisco on Philippine Airlines (PAL) flight PR 104 leaving at 10:30 p.m. today, sources at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport said.

Yesterday morning, word at the Naia was that the First Gentleman was booked on a separate PAL PR 104 that was to leave at 10:30 last night.

Shortly after lunch, however, a source said Arroyo's booking had been changed, most likely to another airline, but that his booking with PAL was not necessarily cancelled.

Over the weekend, sources said Arroyo was booked to leave at 8:30 last night on the Los Angeles-bound PAL flight PR 102. His booking on the flight was later cancelled.

Also Cathay

He was also booked on Cathay Pacific flight CX 900 bound for Hong Kong today, another source told the INQUIRER. That flight is to depart at 12 noon.

The First Gentleman first left for Hong Kong on Thursday night, with youngest son, Diosdado, and the latter's wife and daughter. He came back on Sunday night.

Colonel blames Reds for woes

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CAMP AQUINO, Tarlac City—Army Col. Gregorio Pio Catapang Jr. yesterday blamed communists for reports linking him to an alleged plot to destabilize the Arroyo administration, and said he was relinquishing his post at the Northern Luzon Command effective July 15.

Catapang, Nolcom chief of staff and operations head, said he was reporting back to the Army and expected a reassignment either in the Visayas or Mindanao within the month.

Catapang told the INQUIRER he was neither being investigated nor being relieved of his post.

"I am simply tendering a courtesy resignatioñ," he said.

In a press briefing, Catapang blamed the Communist Party of the Philippines, its armed unit New People's Army and the broad alliance National Democratic Front for reports implicating him to destabilization moves against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"If there's one group I hurt most in my work it is the CPP, NPA and the NDF," he said. "It is the CPP, NPA and NDF that are destroying my career."

He denied he was involved in any effort to topple Ms Arroyo.

Nolcom chief Lt. Gen. Romeo Dominguez told reporters there had been a request from Vice President Noli de Castro for Catapang to be assigned as his "senior military adviser."

Dominguez said De Castro's request was made to the AFP chief of staff after he won in last year's elections.

Instead of going full time, Catapang reported once a week to De Castro, submitting only briefing papers on the internal security campaign in Northern Luzon, he said.

Dominguez said he found nothing irregular in Catapang's working with De Castro.

"The GHQ knows this arrangement," he said.

Biazon says young . . .

From page A1

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said yesterday.

The chair of the Senate committee on national defense and security said he promptly relayed the officers' concern to President Macapagal-Arroyo but he did not say what her reaction was.

"These idealistic young officers are mad and they are even considering a mass leave or mass resignation. I am advising them not to do this because if they do, this country will be thrown into chaos," Biazon, a former Armed Forces chief of staff, told reporters.

Rumors about destabilization plots and discontent within the military flared after the release of a controversial tape of supposed conversations between Ms Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano allegedly dealing with rigging the results of last year's elections.

One of those linked to the supposed plots, Army Col. Gregorio Pio Catapang Jr., denied he was involved in any effort to oust Ms Arroyo and announced that, as a matter of courtesy he was relinquishing his post as chief of staff and operations head of the Northern Luzon Command.

Promoted, instead of punished

Biazon said a number of junior and senior officers, including generals, and ordinary soldiers were angry that some officers allegedly involved in the election were promoted instead of being punished.

He said the officers told him of their sentiments when they met him at an undisclosed place last Saturday.

"When they hear that some senior officers had been used as political tools and possibly participated in the conduct or commission of election fraud, they are mad," Biazon said.

Biazon declined to identify the generals but said their names were now public knowledge because they had been mentioned in the "GMA-Garci tape."

Generals, names on tape

In the tape, a man said to be Garcillano mentioned the names of "General Esperon and General Kyamco." The name of a "Gudani" also cropped up.

There was no definite indication in transcripts of the tape that the names referred to Maj. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, then AFP chief of staff for operations, Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamco, then chief of the Southern Command, or Marine Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani.

Esperon has said he was ready to face any investigation and maintained the elections in Mindanao were clean. The other officers have not made any public statements.

In the tape, the man said to be Garcillano was heard saying that "Gudani" was with the opposition and "that's why I had to work with General Esperon and Generial Kyamco."

Prostituting the military

Biazon said one of the military people who met him described the participation of officers in alleged electoral fraud as "prostitution of the military."

One of them also bewailed the "culture of allowing ourselves to be used to get promotions," he said.

He said the officers he talked with wanted to preserve the constitutional prohibition against the military's involvement in politics.

Biazon said the officers asked him if he would call for an investigation and he said it would depend on the outcome of House hearings on the wiretapping controversy.

Biazon did not say how Ms Arroyo reacted to the information he gave her.

"I was not waiting for any response. I am waiting for actions to be taken," Biazon said.

"We cannot disregard this concern of the rank and file in the AFP. They don't want their officers to be used as political tools—I am not making a conclusion here—but if nothing is done on this issue raised, anything can happen," Biazon said.

Biazon said the military was "intact" for now because the officers were waiting to see how "the institutions and the institutional processes" would handle the accusations leveled against Ms Arroyo.

No fence-sitter

In Cebu City, retired Col. Billy Bibit claimed that recruitment of officers to move against Ms Arroyo, which he said began late last year, had intensified in the wake of the tape scandal.

He said these AFP elements were convinced Ms Arroyo should resign and were just waiting foı an appropriate time to act.

Bibit, a member of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement which plotted the ouster of dictator Ferdinand Marcos, said he would not be a "bystander" if the time came to act.

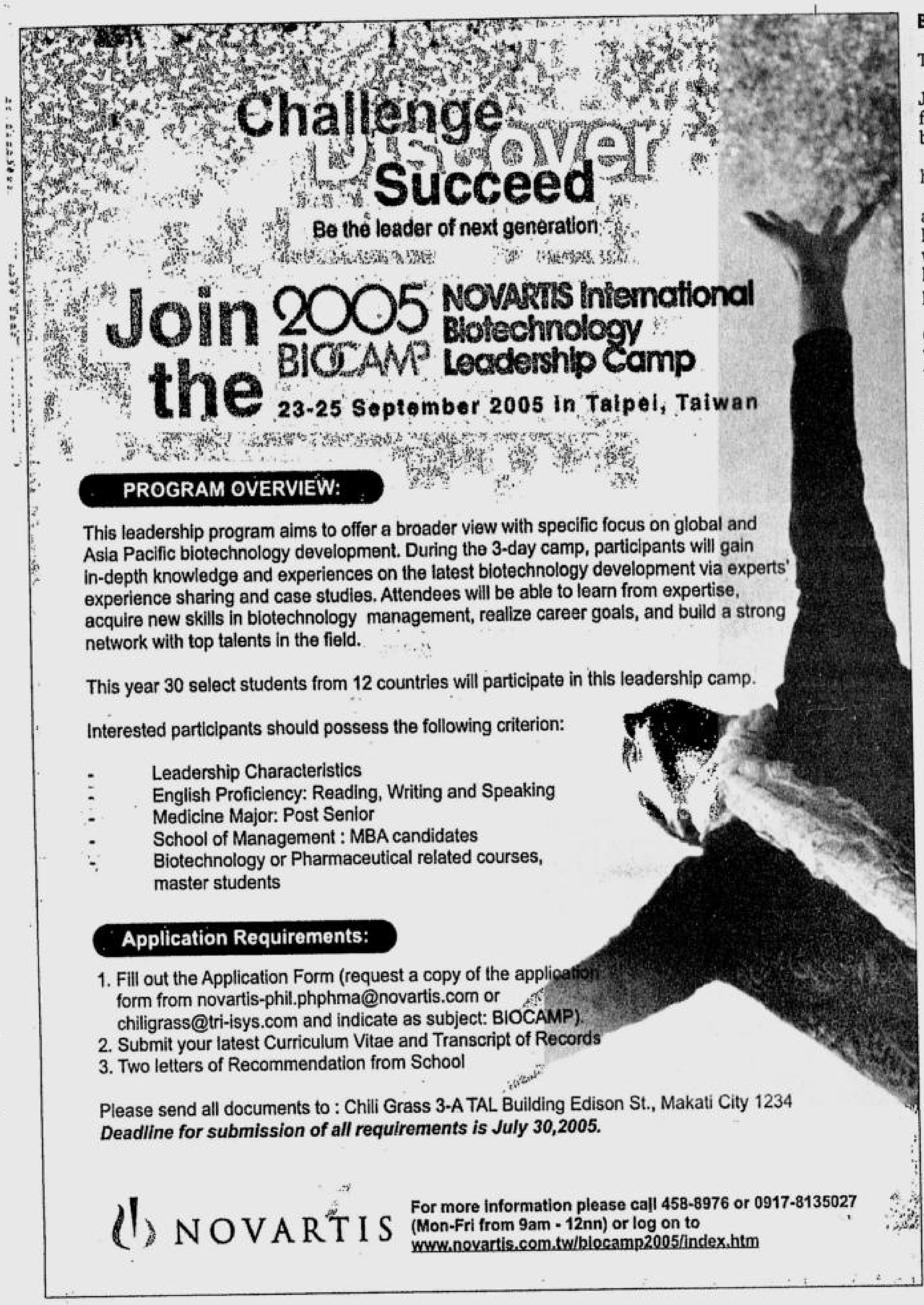
"In this world, there are three kinds of people. Those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, (and) those who wonder what happened. I'm neither of the last two."

Asked where he belonged, he laughed: "*Tua ta sa* number one (We are at number one). We make things happen," said Bibit, a former Cebu customs collector and now president of the two factions of Guardians—the Guardian Brotherhood Inc. and Guardians Chapter Foundation Inc.

Retired police officer Romeo Maganto said he was a victim of election maneuverings supposedly involving Garcillano.

Maganto ran for Bulacan governor but was disqualified over the issue of residence.

He said he was ready to testify against Garcillano if a hearing should be held. *With a report from Tarra V. Quismundo*



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3 RP-based groups win green Oscars

From page A1

able management and harvesting of the Kikuyu escarpment forests in Kenya.

The BPCP also gave $28,000 funding to a local environmentalist group led by Dan Bennett for the preservation of Polilio Island's monitor lizard.

Carmela Española and her group received $12,500 from the BPCP so it can protect the habitat of the Calayan rail (Gallirallus calayanensis), a rare bird species discovered in the Babuyan Group of Islands in May last year.

A total of $600,000 or grants ranging between $7,500 to $75,000 were given to 28 different conservation teams chosen from over 400 applicants.

The awards were given on June 23 at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington DC. Renowned environmentalist and Harvard professor Edward O. Wilson was the guest of honor.

The BP Conservation Programme is a partnership initiative between British Petroleum, the Wildlife Conservation Society, BirdLife International, Fauna and Flora International and Conservation International. The program aims to develop and support the skills and networks of future generations of conservation professionals who are working to address global biodiversity conservation priorities at a local level.

Severely endangered

The Philippine crocodile (Crocodylus mindorensis) is the most severely endangered crocodile in the world. The species was rediscovered in 1999 in Luzon, which led to the establishment of the Crocodile Rehabilitation, Observance and Conservation (CROC) Project, funded by the BP Conservation Programme in 2002 and 2003.

The $75,000 award will enable CROC Project, a community-based research, observance and conservation project, to continue to work with the critically endangered Philippine crocodile, a freshwater species of which, there are approximately only 50 left, in Northern Luzon.

The CROC Project is the first group to implement conservation activities for the species. The once-rampant hunting of the crocodiles has ceased and there has been a two-fold increase in the non-hatchling population size.

A local conservation organization, the Mabuwaya Foundation Inc., was also established to spearhead the Philippine crocodile conservation activities in Luzon.

With continued support from the BPCP, the foundation is confident it will become a full-fledged independent and effective organization focused on Philippine crocodile and wetland conservation by the end of 2007.

Monitoring the lizard

The preservation of Polilio Island's monitor lizard received $28,000 in funding to further study and preserve the endemic amphibians known locally as *bayawak*.

The environmentalist group led by Dan Bennett will use nonintrusive methodologies developed on Polilio Island, Quezon Province, to investigate the distribution and status of the monitor lizard in the remaining forest fragments of Luzon and its adjacent islands, and to identify key conservation resources.

For rare Calayan rail

After accidentally discovering an endemic flightless bird now called the Calayan rail (Gallirallus calayanensis), in the Babuyan Islands in May last year, Carmela Española sought funding from the BPCP to preserve the bird species that can only be found in the Philippines.

The rail is the size of a small crow with dark brown plumage and bright orange red legs and beak. Calayan residents said they used to catch the rail, locally known as *piding*, for food, unaware it was a rare species.

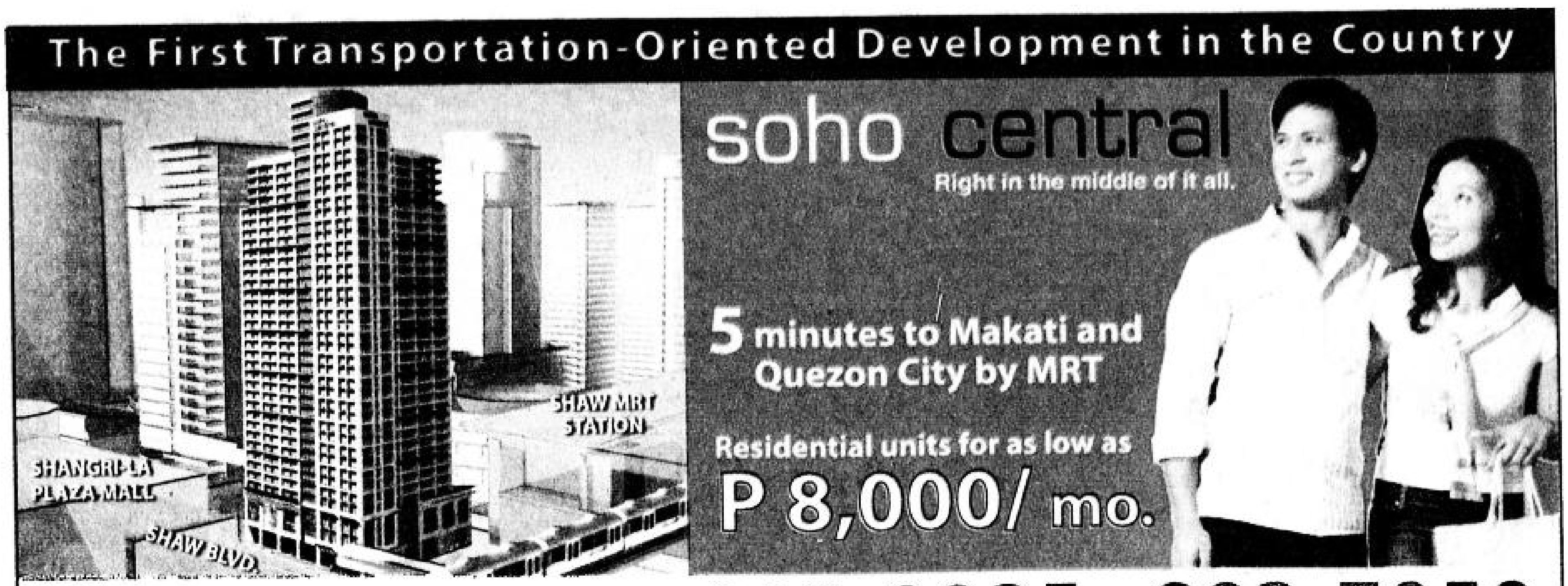
BPCP gave $12,500 to Española's group to determine the species' actual conservation threat status and to define the boundaries of a planned protected area in the Babuyan Islands.

"We will conduct baseline research on the rail's population and distribution. The proposed project will produce a thorough threat assessment for the rail and its habitat and formulate workable conservation measures in collaboration with local government units, nongovernment organizations and other institutions," Española said in an interview.

She added that the playback census technique will be used in assessing the rail's population and distribution.

"Our study will include notes on the habitat requirements, threats and ecology of the Calayan rail based on field observations and from interviews with local people," Española said.

"We want to launch an environmental education campaign in schools and forest communities. We want to conduct workshops with stakeholders so we can draw a conservation action plan for the Calayan rail," she said.



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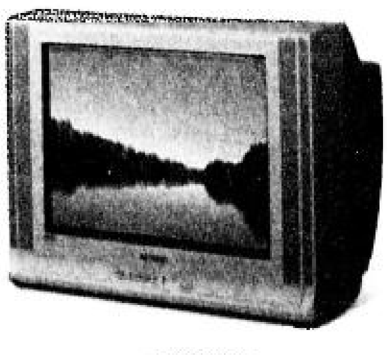

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Nene twits Joker: He's like a bat

From page A1

the minority had managed to get the House vote to unseat President Joseph Estrada. Otherwise, those seeking the President's ouster should get out of their cozy offices and risk tear gas and truncheons in the streets, Arroyo said.

"Joker should be the last person to talk about industry as a virtue. He should be the last person to lecture the opposition on what to do regarding Gloria, especially on the matter of impeachment," Pimentel retorted.

Pimentel likened Arroyo to a bat, which he said chose to hang upside down, took no sides in the war between animals and birds at the dawn of history and pretended it was "neither animal nor fowl."

Common struggle

"He is actually trying to speak from both sides of his mouth, appearing to defend Gloria, but at the same time actually saying nothing substantial in favor of or against Gloria," he said in a statement.

"The people expect more from Joker in the light of our common struggle against the Marcos dictatorship," he added.

Arroyo, who served as Pimentel's counsel when he was clapped in jail during the martial law years, shot back: "The impeachment and the resign processes, both intended to remove GMA, have now become incidental to the critical question of who will succeed GMA."

By urging the President and Vice President Noli de Castro to resign to pave the way for a snap presidential and vice presidential elections, Pimentel "has let the cat out of the opposition bag," Arroyo said in a statement.

"They want to grab the reins of power although they do not have the mandate from the people. The resign movement is a ruse, a cover-up for their true intentions—they want to choose Gloria's successor, to be in power," he said.

Out of order

Arroyo said that Pimentel's clamor for Ms Arroyo's resignation was "perfectly in order," but his call for De Castro's resignation was "definitely out of order."

De Castro, Arroyo pointed out, was elected by the sovereign will of the people, and his job description was to succeed the President. In asking De Castro to resign, Pimentel is undermining the Constitution and his solemn oath to uphold it, Arroyo said.

"By insisting on Noli to resign so that the opposition can take over, they have muddled the removal choices and obfuscated the people," Arroyo said.

As to where his loyalties lay, Arroyo had this to say: "Am I for Gloria? No. Never. I am for upholding the Constitution, period, which Pimentel, a child of the Constitution, unfortunately abhors."

Arroyo has found an unlikely ally in Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile.

Numerical superiority

"If I belong to the House opposition, I will file the impeachment proceeding. In fact it's not only the duty of the opposition; it's the duty of the House of Representatives regardless of party," Enrile told reporters. "That's why they're the impeaching body."

Pimentel, however, maintained his opposition to the filing of impeachment charges against the President in view of the "numerical superiority" of administration lawmakers to block the move.

UST calls for 'truth . . .

From page A1

that will result in genuine democratic reforms.

De La Salle University and the University of the Philippines College of Law earlier urged the President to leave Malacañang.

For its part, the University Student Council of University of the Philippines Manila called on both Ms Arroyo and Vice President Noli de Castro to resign.

The Ateneo Law School on Monday did not call on Ms Arroyo to step down but said it was up to her to do what was best for the country.

More clarification

Dr. Armando de Jesus, vice rector for academic affairs, said the position of UST did not necessarily preclude the possibility of the university joining calls for the President to step down.

"I think we have to bide for time and wait for issues to be further clarified," he told the INQUIRER in an interview.

De Jesus, a sociologist, said the UST position articulated the general sentiments of the middle class, which represents most of the school's 32,000 students.

"The middle class is usually the silent majority so it's very important to articulate their sentiments," he said. "They usually have more to lose. History would tell us that where the middle class goes, the country goes."

De Jesus said the UST position was an "elaborate" version of Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales' pastoral letter read during Masses last Sunday. In the letter, Rosales called for sobriety while reminding the President that seeking forgiveness should not abandon accountability.

In a statement, UST said the truth commission should be composed of non-partisan sectors "enjoying general social acceptance" such as the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, the religious sector, the academe, and business and nongovernment organizations.

"It will be the task of the commission to ferret out the truth, establish culpability, and impose sanctions and restitution," it said. "The political branches of the government—the executive and the legislative—must agree to the establishment of the commission, submit to its summons, and cooperate with it wholeheartedly."

Other schools

UST officials are expected to present their position at the meeting of the Catholic Educators Association of the Philippines (CEAP) and the Manila Archdiocesan and Parochial Schools Association at St. Scholastica's College in Manila tomorrow.

CEAP insiders said they were expecting a heated debate, considering that La Salle, another key CEAP member, had already released a strongly worded statement demanding Ms Arroyo's resignation.

UST, traditionally conservative on political issues, apparently did not want to go that far yet.

"It is important that truth and its pursuit must be managed well, lest it worsen the instability of the country," it said. "Toward this, all attempts to resolve the crisis should conform to the Constitution and the rule of the law."

The Student Christian Movement of the Philippines (SCMP) called on CEAP and the CBCP to "stand by what is true and help render justice to the Filipino people."

Dion Carlo Cerrafon, SCMP chairperson, said the group was also joining calls for Arroyo to step down.

In Baguio City, the faculty of UP Baguio dismissed Ms Arroyo's admission of talking with an election official as "not a mere lapse in judgment" but a "premeditated abuse of power and influence."

"In these times of grave economic and political crises, we need a President with unquestioned moral ascendancy and political legitimacy," the faculty said in a statement which was issued after the university council's committee for national concerns met on Monday.

"The latest political crisis in our country has established that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has lost both."

The Baguio teachers accused Malacañang of covering the tracks of Ms Arroyo's "clear violation of the Constitution in her efforts to manipulate election results in her favor."

Watered-down apology

"We cannot accept her watered-down apology, couched as it was by skirting of the real offense of cheating, and prettified as usual by statements on the economic progress we are experiencing, and democratic processes and institutions we all enjoy," the faculty said.

The teachers assailed Malacañang's "clever manipulation" by "conditioning the public to believe that there are no viable alternatives to Ms Arroyo."

They called this an insult to the Filipino people. "We have not lacked national leaders who are incorruptible, marked by integrity, genuine self-sacrifice and the political will for initiating and instituting fundamental reform."

What Ms Arroyo should do, the faculty said, is to "make the supreme sacrifice of stepping down and facing the consequences of her offense."

Noli, too

In a statement, the UP Manila Student Council said the President had "betrayed the public trust."

"We call on her and her Vice President Noli De Castro to resign, considering that by PGMA's own admission, her involvement with Comelec puts to question even her running mate's election," the council said.

It also called on Senate President Franklin Drilon, who had in the past voiced support for Ms Arroyo, "to temporarily govern and call for new elections, as is provided in the Constitution."

The council also called for a deeper probe into the "Gloriagate" tape.

Shadow play

UST noted that there was a need to "depoliticize the truth and truth-seeking," pointing out that Ms Arroyo's carefully worded confession, the congressional inquiry on the controversial tape, and media coverage all seemed to be "working toward evading rather than revealing the truth."

"They amount to nothing but shadow play, with the truth cast in ever darkening pallor," it said.

UST also advised the media to maintain accuracy in reporting on the crisis, and the public to keep an open mind "in winnowing the chaff of lies and dissimulation from the grain of truth" and reject violence.

Already, institutes within the UST have been hosting dialogues and discussions "to clear the issues and arrive at moral and effective responses."

A Mass for Peace, Unity and Truth is set to be held on July 7 at the Santissimo Rosario Parish Church on the UST campus.

Middle forces

Education Secretary Florencio Abad said the government was concerned about the views expressed by groups belonging to "middle" forces, which, according to him, were instrumental in the success of the people power uprisings in 1986 and 2001.

At a briefing in Malacañang, Abad acknowledged that the government was now moving to "explain the situation" to these groups.

Online petition

The middle forces have come up with positions that are either moderate or extreme in connection with the President's admission that she talked to an election official during the canvassing of votes in last year's balloting, according to Abad.

"So there is an ongoing debate and a lot of that will be influenced by the actions of the President and the government in the coming days," he said.

A group of writers have also started and signed an online petition calling for the ouster or resignation of Ms Arroyo. They said Ms Arroyo had repeatedly violated the freedom of expression by the banning of films of substance and turning a blind eye to obscenity in noontime shows.

The writers include Joy Barrios, couple Gelacio and Alice Guillermo, Elmer Ordoñez and Epifanio San Juan Jr. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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Flash floods alert raised in Quezon, Aurora

THE WEATHER bureau warned of possible flash floods again ravaging Quezon and Aurora provinces as tropical depression "Emong" entered the country yesterday.

Packing winds of 55 kph, Emong was spotted east northeast of Infanta, Quezon early yesterday morning and moving toward central Luzon by noon yesterday.

The Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical administration raised storm signal No. 1 in Luzon at 11 a.m. yesterday and warned that Quezon and Aurora, the two provinces that were devastated by successive typhoons last year, could again be vulnerable.

"It's insignificant in terms of wind strength, but landslides and flash floods are usually caused by much rainfall, like Winnie last year. Look what happened to Quezon," said Nathaniel Cruz, Pagasa weather branch chief.

He said Emong, the fifth storm to hit the country this year, would affect Camarines Norte, Polillio island, Aurora, Bulacan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Zambales, Pangasinan, Quirino, Nueva Vizcaya, Benguet, Ifugao, La Union and Ilocos Sur.

Cruz said tropical depressions usually carried much rain but had little wind strength. Several days of continuous rain could trigger landslides, he said.

Some places which may not even have recovered from past disasters could just be waiting for a triggering mechanism, like rain or an earthquake, before caving in, he said.

But the weather station said storm signal No. 1 could not be a basis for issuing an advice to evacuate.

"They (residents) are in the best position to know if they should evacuate. They know the place, they can monitor changes in land and soil use. Their decision can be based on experience," Cruz said.

The average rainfall for storm signal No. 1 is around 100 mm in 24 hours, Cruz said.

The volume of rainfall during the successive typhoons that hit Quezon and Aurora in late 2004 reached 300 mm in 24 hours, Cruz said. The rains had been going on for at least a week before the typhoons struck, he said.

The resulting floods and landslides left 149 people dead, hundreds more injured and caused P545 million worth of damage to public structures and agriculture in the two provinces.

Cruz said a similar disaster could hit the southern Luzon provinces if another tropical depression comes in soon after Emong, following days of continuous rains.

"But we have not monitored any more tropical cyclones entering the country yet," he said.

Pagasa is waiting for the acquisition of two Doppler radars that could predict the volume of rainfall for every tropical cyclone.

"It would greatly improve our forecast capability," Cruz said. *Blanche S. Rivera*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, July 6, 2005
14th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Gen 41:55-57; 42:5-7,17-24

Gospel: Matthew 10:1-7

Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority over the unclean spirits to drive them out and to heal every disease and sickness.

These are the names of the twelve apostles: first Simon, called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, the tax collector; James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon, the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, the man who would betray him.

Jesus sent these twelve on mission with the instruction: "Do not visit pagan territory and do not enter a Samaritan town. Go instead to the lost sheep of the people of Israel.

"Go and proclaim this message: The kingdom of heaven is near."

Commentary

Jesus calls his disciples by name and gives them authority to continue his work—to drive out what is unclean and unjust and to heal people of disease and sickness that hinders them from life as children of God. They are named but collectively called the twelve—a community of disciples, not to be seen primarily as individuals and they are given a mission to their own people first—the lost sheep—the masses and majority of people in Israel (which are the same in number and need in every nation). The message is clear—the kingdom, long awaited of the prophets that called for justice and remembrance of the poor as true worship of the God of the covenant is close at hand, near to them—near to them in his own presence and person. Do we belong to a community (at least twelve) and are we known for being good news?

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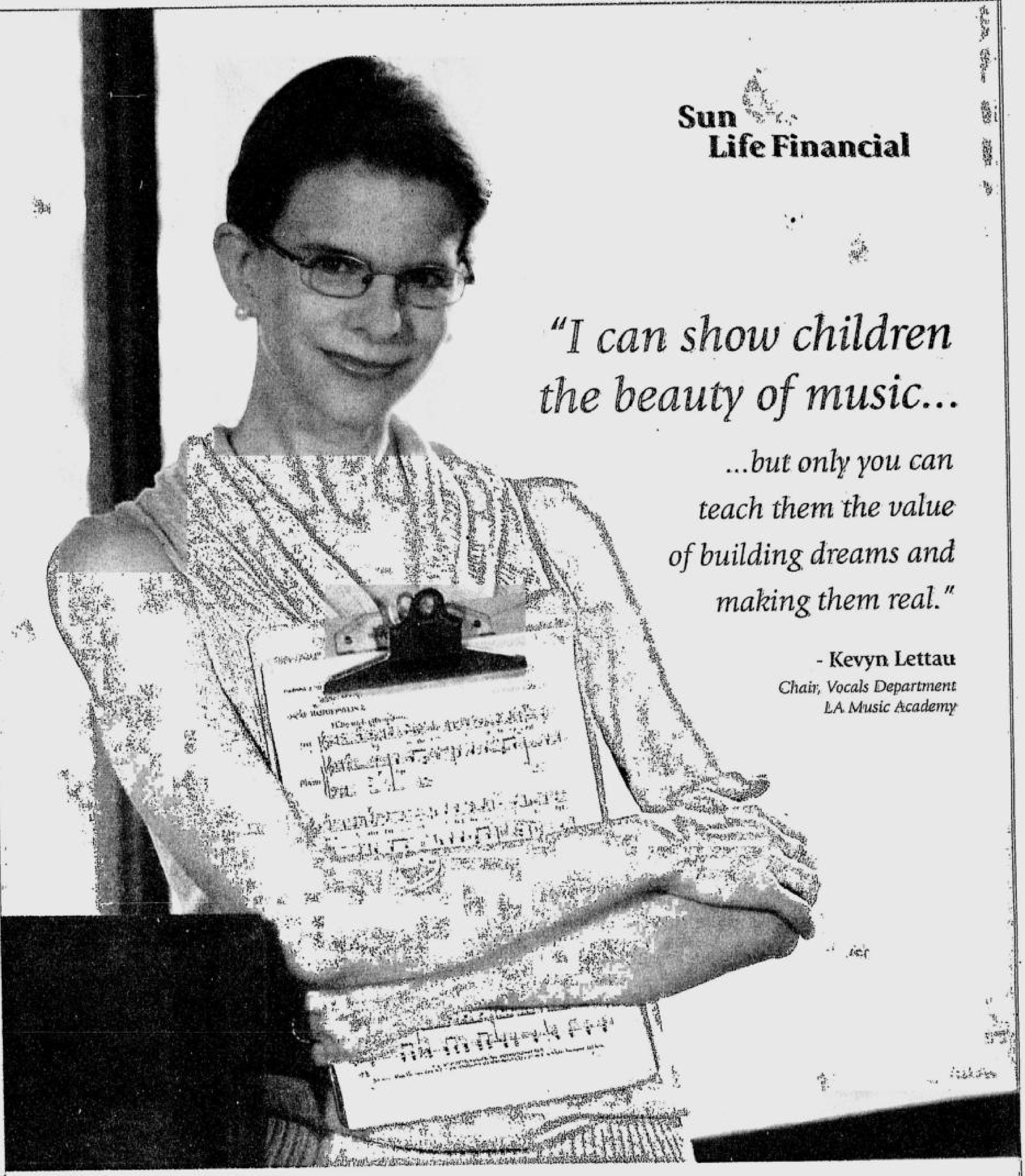
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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Bahrain's envoy in Iraq wounded in ambush

BAGHDAD—Bahrain's top diplomat to Iraq was wounded Tuesday in an apparent kidnap attempt three days after the abduction of Egypt's ambassador designate, as the Iraqi government chastised diplomats for traveling without protection.

A spokesperson for the Iraqi government said Egypt's Ihab al-Sharif may have contacted groups close to his captors, which compromised his security.

AL-ANSARI

As US President George W. Bush hailed the sacrifices made in rebuilding Iraq, violence continued to rage, with four women gunned down on their way to work at Baghdad airport.

Gunmen aboard a pickup truck opened fire on Hassan al-Ansari, the Bahraini charge d'affaires, while he was traveling in his car with diplomatic-license plates in the upscale Mansur district, an interior ministry source said.

Yarmuk hospital said Ansari was treated for a gunshot wound in his right shoulder before leaving with guards.

Witnesses said Ansari was ambushed by at least eight gunmen after leaving his residence.

"Two men got out of their cars and screamed at him 'get out of your car' and, at me, 'get back inside,'" a butcher shop owner said.

Instead, the diplomat kept going, and two of the men shot at him with an assault rifle and pistol, he said.

Ansari's car slowed down, but when the men ran after him he accelerated and managed to get away.

Two hundred meters further on, Ansari stopped in a street called 14 Nissan near a policeman and cried out: "I am a diplomat, help me!"

The policeman named Adel said "he was bleeding a lot. His suit, case and car were covered with blood. A short time later, a police patrol passed by and took him to the hospital."

No group has yet claimed responsibility for abducting Egypt's Sharif, who was set to become the first ambassador from an Arab nation to Iraq since the fall of Saddam Hussein.

Sharif was also the first head of mission to be abducted since Iraq's hostage crisis began.

The Iraqi government's spokesperson expressed surprise Sharif was traveling on Baghdad's perilous roads without much protection, and said that his security may have been compromised by contacts he may have had with political groups with ties to insurgents.

"The only advice we give is that if a diplomat from this mission or another wants to contact political groups that may be close to armed groups, then the least he can do is tell the government which can bear some responsibility," Leith Kubba told reporters.

"We do not know the circumstances (surrounding Sharif's kidnapping) but this is one of the possibilities."

Kubba said the targeting of foreign diplomats is part of a calculated effort by insurgents to discourage countries from dealing with the Iraqi government. *AFP*

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Bin Laden may be in Afghan south, Pakistan says

ISLAMABAD—Al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden and his close allies might be hiding in southern Afghanistan, which has seen a sharp rise in militant violence in recent weeks, a Pakistani minister said in remarks published on Tuesday.

The whereabouts of Bin Laden, architect of the Sept. 11 attacks, and top militants such as his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahri, and Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar, are not known but they are suspected of hiding along the rugged Afghan-Pakistani border.

Although both close US allies, tension has risen between Afghanistan and Pakistan over Afghan and US military accusations that militants launch attacks into Afghanistan from the safety of Pakistan.

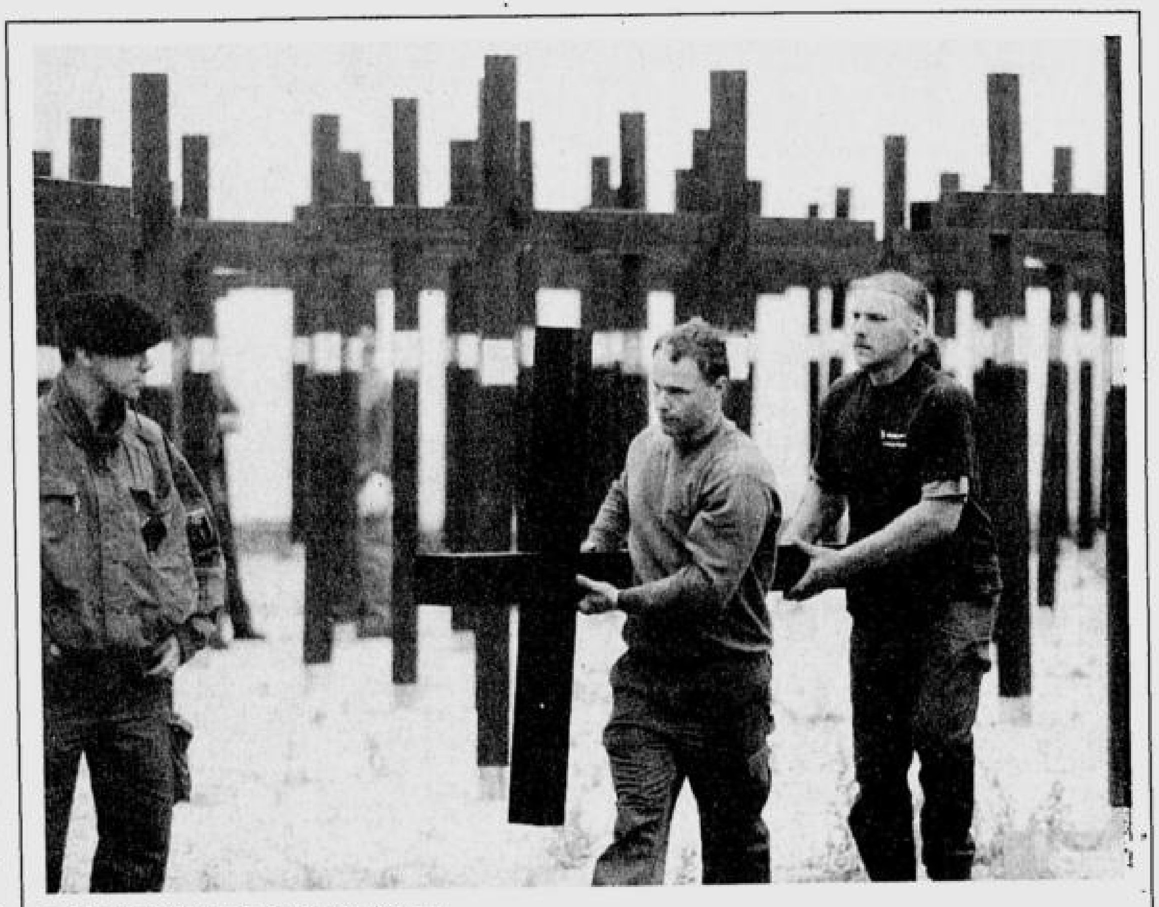
Afghan and US officials there also say bin Laden is not in Afghanistan, suggesting he must be in Pakistan. Pakistani officials insist he is not in their country.

Pakistani Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao again ruled out the possibility that bin Laden was in Pakistan and said the fugitive leader and his allies might be hiding in Afghanistan's restive south.

"The possibility of Mullah Omar, Osama bin Laden and his close aide, Ayman al-Zawahri, hiding in that area cannot be ruled out," Sherpao told the Pakistani state-run Associated Press of Pakistan.

Southern parts of Afghanistan were not under effective control of the Afghan government, he said.

The former US ambassador to Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, told a news conference in Kabul last month he did not believe bin Laden or Omar were in Afghanistan, though he did not say where he thought they were. *Reuters*


DISMANTLING A MEMORIAL
Workers remove crosses from the private Wall memorial near the former allied Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin, Tuesday, July 5. The memorial is now being dismantled after the lease for the site expired in 2004. The 1.065 crosses stood for the number of victims killed at the border from 1961 to 1989. AP

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Militants storm Hindu shrine in India

NEW DELHI—Four unidentified militants lobbing bombs and firing automatic weapons stormed a Hindu temple at one of India's holiest religious sites on Tuesday, setting off a fierce gunbattle with police that left all the attackers dead, news reports said.

The sprawling 32-hectare complex in the northern city of Ayodhya stands at the heart of India's biggest religious controversy. It is the site where Hindu nationalists demolished an ancient Muslim mosque in 1992, sparking religious riots that killed more than 2,000 people.

Even before the shootout with police was over, Hindu nationalists quickly blamed Pakistan-backed "jihad terrorists" for the attack and said the incident proved India's recent peace overtures with Islamabad were a failure.

However, the country's largest Hindu group appealed to the public to keep any protests peaceful. A leading Islamic leader also urged peace, saying the attackers helped neither their faith nor their country.

"There were four attackers. They lobbed bombs and started firing," Commissioner Arun Kumar Sinha told the private Aaj Tak channel.

Police official R. R. Bharti in Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh state where Ayodhya is located, said that four militants had been killed at the site. The driver of the militants was also captured, Sinha said.

Hindu leaders claim the mosque in Ayodhya, 550 km east of New Delhi, was built by Mogul rulers at the site of a Hindu temple. They believe the site is the birthplace of Hinduism's supreme god, Ram, but Muslims say there is no proof of that claim. The dispute is still working its way through India's courts.

The men arrived in car and parked it outside the security periphery before sneaking in, Sinha said.

"We were getting general inputs that terrorists can attack the site ... There has been a security lapse. We will fix responsibility and take corrective action," he told New Delhi Television News. *AP*

Assassination try on Sharon feared

JERUSALEM—Israeli President Moshe Katsav said on Monday the vocal opposition of pro-settler rabbis to Israel's Gaza pullout could incite ultranationalists to try to assassinate Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

"In the struggle over the disengagement someone is likely to distort the rabbis' messages," Katsav told Army Radio.

The result, he said, could be "extremist actions" and "the distorted conclusion that to prevent Israel's destruction, one must assassinate the prime minister". The Shin Bet security service on Sunday measured Sharon and members of his cabinet for bulletproof vests, a sign of increasing fears of violence against Israeli leaders ahead of the pullout due to begin in mid-August.

In recent weeks, some pro-settler rabbis have sharpened their rhetoric against the withdrawal from land they see as a biblical birthright, condemning it as a violation of Jewish law and a danger to Israel's existence.

Such talk has revived memories of verbal attacks on Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin before his assassination in 1995 by an ultra-rightist Jew opposed to his peace moves with Palestinians.

Sharon aims to evacuate all 21 Jewish settlements in Gaza, which is home to 1.3 million Palestinians, and four of 120 in the West Bank.

Palestinians welcome any Israeli withdrawals from lands occupied in the 1967 Middle East war. However, they say they fear Sharon intends to leave Gaza mainly in order to cement Israel's hold on much larger settlements in the West Bank.

Jewish settler leaders have called for passive resistance to the planned evacuation of the settlements.

Hoping to sharpen that message, right-wing legislator Effi Eitam said on Israel Radio he planned to meet rabbis and settlers to draft a charter of non-violence to avoid clashes with Israeli soldiers during the pullout.

"In this charter we will have a clause specifying there cannot be any (settler) weapons in the evacuation area. We are trying to ensure that even if the atmosphere heats up there will be a good chance of preventing a disaster," Eitam said.

Israeli security officials have said they plan to collect the army-issued weapons carried by many of the 8,500 settlers facing evacuation. *Reuters*

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Japanese PM wins crucial parliament vote

TOKYO—Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi scored a slim victory on Tuesday when parliament's lower house approved bills to privatize the postal system, legislation that is the centerpiece of his reform agenda.

Koizumi had said a failure to pass the bills, which faced opposition from within his own ruling party, would be tantamount to a no-confidence vote, a tacit threat to call a snap election if the legislation was rejected.

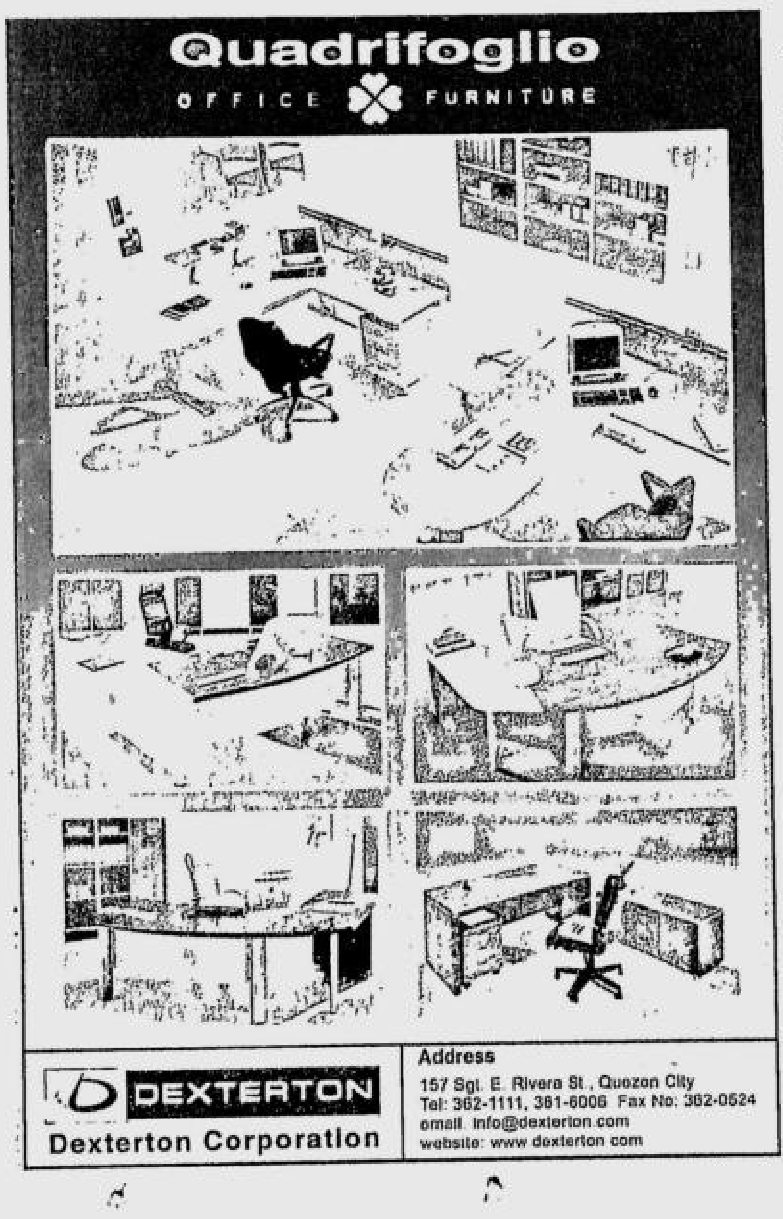
Japanese media said close to 40 members of Koizumi's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) defied party policy and voted against the bills, bringing the final tally to 233 votes in support of the bills and 228 against them.

The LDP holds 250 seats in the powerful 480-seat lower chamber.

The bills will next be submitted to the upper house, where it needs to be approved in order for them to be enacted.

"We still have a long way ahead of us in the upper house, but we will do our best to have them enacted," Heizo Takenaka, cabinet minister in charge of postal privatization, told reporters after the vote.

Privatization of the postal system, which has assets of over $3 trillion including the world's largest bank, had long been a taboo within the LDP. *Reuters*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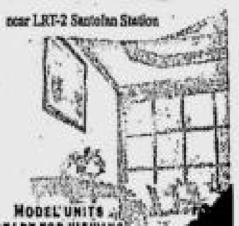

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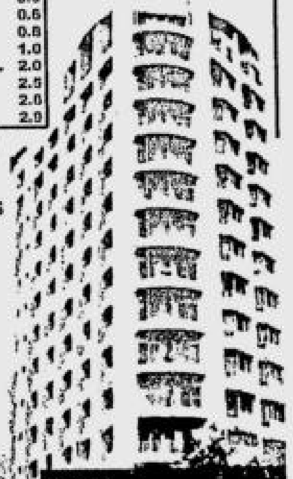

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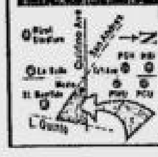

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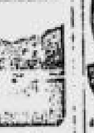

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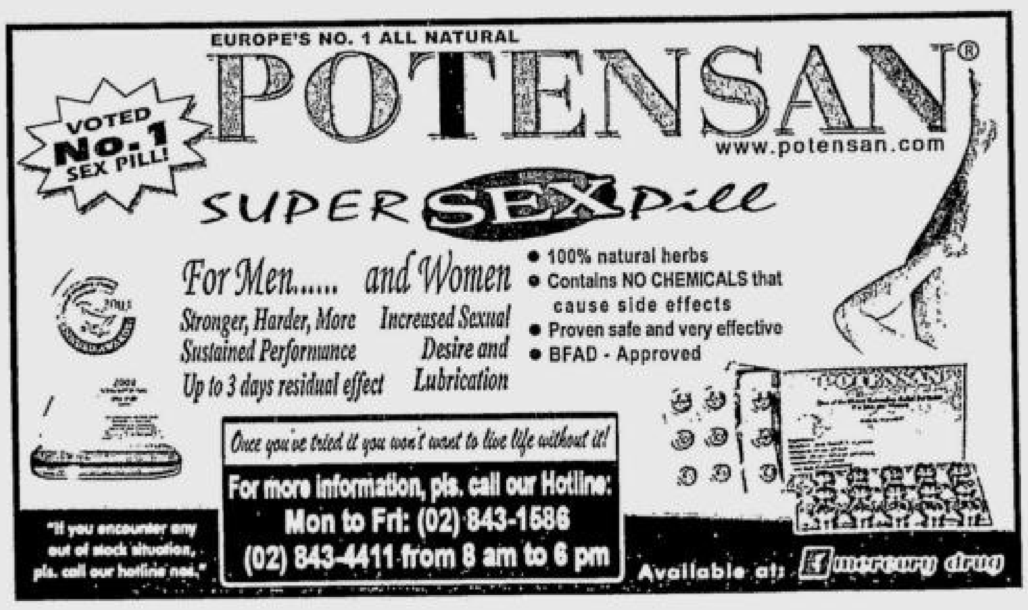
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Better insurance on cost of terror attacks urged

PARIS—Some of the world's most advanced economies remain ill-equipped to survive the fallout from a major terrorist atrocity, the OECD warned Tuesday, despite widespread efforts since the Sept. 11 attacks to spread insurance risk between public and private sectors.

"There are still significant gaps in coverage, which could be revealed by another large-scale attack," said the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, a Paris-based club of 30 industrialized countries, in a statement prepared to accompany publication of a report on terrorism risk insurance.

Almost four years after hijacked passenger jets slammed into the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington D.C., killing nearly 3,000 people and running up the world's biggest ever insurance bill, the calculation of such risks remains fraught with difficulties and the worst kinds of attack uninsurable, the 289-page study says.

While governments are rightly devoting attention to preventing further attacks, the report adds, "ensuring financial coverage of the terrorism risk, if prevention were to fail, is a no less important policy issue to mitigate the potentially devastating impacts of future attacks."

Faced with a shortfall of reasonably priced insurance, the United States, Australia, France, Germany and the Netherlands stepped in after the Sept. 11 attacks to offer last-resort government guarantees to their companies. Two other OECD countries, Britain and Spain, already had similar schemes in place before 2001.

But cover is still patchy even in some of the countries where it is most readily available, said Cecile Vignial-Denain of the OECD's financial markets division, who directed the study.

Only one half of US corporations had taken out terror insurance by the end of last year, while in Germany the figure stands at less than three percent of eligible companies, Vignial-Denain said. "Germany has a very large exposure. A whole swathe of the economy is uninsured."

The report also cautions that insurance policies generally exclude the worst kind of scenario—in which a chemical or nerve agent, nuclear device or radiation-spewing "dirty bomb" is used to attack a major city—and government guarantees often don't provide adequate cover either.

Even if they did, smaller states could be bankrupted by such a "mega-terrorist attack"—which the OECD said could incur losses of up to US$250 billion, or nearly eight times the US$32 billion bill faced by insurers after Sept. 11.

"In some smaller countries, or countries with smaller insurance markets, even if the state came to the rescue it would find it difficult to cover those risks without endangering the stability of its entire economy," Vignial-Denain said.

Post-Sept. 11 predictions that financial markets would meet the insurance shortfall with new "terrorism bonds" and other risk-spreading products have proven overly optimistic, the OECD report says. "A sustained market for such financial instruments to cover terrorism risks has not yet emerged."

Instead, the report suggests that international risk-sharing agreements may be needed along the lines of existing conventions on nuclear disasters—committing member countries to help meet cleanup and compensation costs for each others' plant accidents—but concludes that there is not enough political will for a far-reaching deal on terror risk.

Larger states with bigger budgets and insurance markets, like Britain and France, are less inclined to sign up to such a scheme than neighbors less able to shoulder the economic impact of a major terror strike alone, Vignial-Denain said.

In the end, groups of smaller states are more likely to set up regional schemes to mutualize their terror risks, she predicted. "But whether we would have to wait for another attack before that happens, only the future will tell." *AP*

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A MAN jumps in the air, aiming a kick at police with r
Princess Street, in Edinburgh, Scotland, July 4 ahead

NASA probe leav
debris trail on co

PASADENA, Calif.—A spectacular collision between a spacecraft and a comet has freed a huge plume of primordial material from the comet's nucleus that could unlock the secret of how life arrived on Earth, NASA scientists said on Monday.

The first images returned from the Deep Impact fly-by spacecraft showed a small fireball followed by a much larger, incandescent flash that engulfed one end of the comet Tempel 1 as the impactor smashed into its surface at 1:52 a.m. EDT (0552 GMT) on Monday.

The impactor was vaporized upon slamming into the comet at 37,000 kph—the speed it would take to fly from New York to Los Angeles in about six minutes.

The collision, which occurred 134 million km from Earth, marks the first time a spacecraft has come in contact with a comet.

Observatories on the ground reported that the explosion brightened the comet by a factor of 5 within 15 minutes of impact, scientists at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory

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WORLDBRIEFS

Britain drafts Iraq pullout plan

LONDON—Britain's defense ministry has drafted plans for a s
Iraq over the next 18 months and a big deployment to Afghan
ed. When asked about the article however, a defense ministry
position that British troops would be on the ground in Iraq for
the Iraqi government. "In what would represent the biggest o
armed forces since the Iraq war, the first stage of a run-down
take place this autumn with a handover of security to Iraqis in
the Financial Times said. Without citing sources, the newspap
pended on the ability of Iraq's home-grown security forces to
keeping operations.

UN urges tougher measures on

VIENNA—States must boost security at their nuclear sites an
stolen or smuggled atomic materials to stop them falling into
watchdog said. The global body urged delegates from 83 cou
loopholes in an international law on the protection of atomic
saboteurs. Many countries agree that the 1979 Convention o
ar Material (CPPNM) needs to be adapted to the post-Soviet
ergy Agency (IAEA) Deputy Director General David Waller. In
cover the physical protection of nuclear materials being used
domestic purposes. The amendments to the pact would mak
cover stolen or smuggled nuclear material and "lessen the ra
tage," he added.

Fujimori eyes return from Japan

LIMA—Former Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori was one
turning from exile in Japan and running for office after the fo
identification card. Kenji Fujimori, the youngest of the ex-lea
ther's new national ID card at the foreign ministry offices in d
"will allow my father to register as a presidential candidate in
porters, adding that he will personally take the document to h
president has lived in Japan since fleeing the country in 2000
has issued two extradition requests for Fujimori, who is want
abuses and corruption. Japan has refused to extradite Fujimo

Hamas rebuffs call for Palestinia

GAZA—The Islamic militant group Hamas on Monday rejecte
tinian cabinet, snubbing President Mahmoud Abbas who wa
control Gaza after Israel's pullout. Abbas, facing public press
Palestinian areas, last week offered a place for armed groups
smooth evacuation of Israeli settlers from the occupied territo
"Hamas has decided to reject the offer of (Abbas') Fatah mov
ernment," said Hamas spokesman Mushir al-Masri. "Formin
time will not be useful." He said the decision was taken follow
tions within Hamas.

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Protesters, police clash ahead of G8 Summit

EDINBURGH—Protesters turned up the heat ahead of this week's Group of Eight summit in Scotland, clashing with police in Edinburgh and blocking the gates of Britain's main nuclear submarine base.

Anarchists and anti-globalization demonstrators in the Scottish capital pelted police with stones, bottles and wooden and metal bars after ripping apart public benches, leading police to make 60 arrests.

Police also detained four people at Faslane naval base, where more than 700 mainly young protesters—dancing, beating drums, or lying on the pavement—blocked the gates in and out of the facility.

The protests heightened fears of violent confrontation on the streets when leaders of the world's top industrialized nations convene at the secluded Gleneagles golf resort from Wednesday.

Some 20 police officers and demonstrators were injured in Edinburgh, none of them seriously, said police, who put the number of protesters at about 1,000.

By nightfall—when the roads began to clear and police started to pull out—three people were still in hospital.

"Their agenda was not lawful protest, this was about bringing disruption," said Tom Halpin, assistant chief constable of Lothian/Borders Police.

He said outbreaks of disorder broke out around the Princes Street shopping area of the city during the day, prompting the police to respond in a "robust and proportionate" manner. *AFP*

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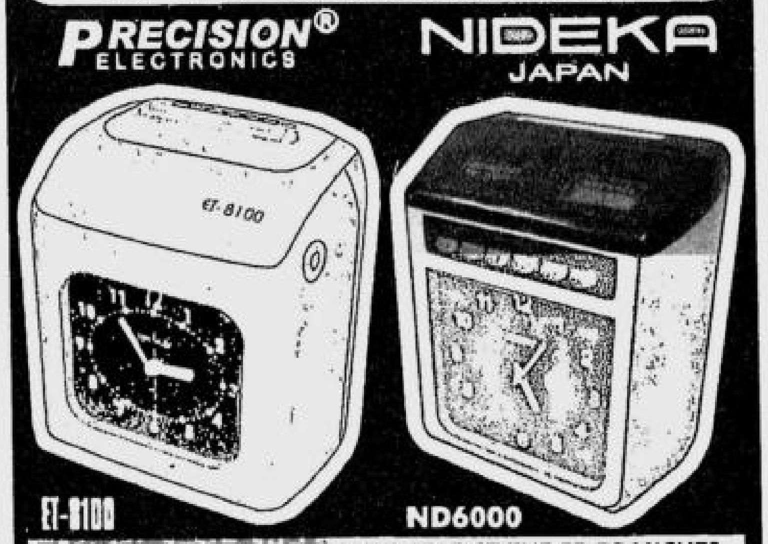

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ot shields during a clash on
of the G8 Summit. AFP

es crater, omet

n Pasadena said.

could not immediately de- size of the crater produced by ecause of the large plume of gases streaming out and ob- end of the comet, which is of Manhattan.

vaiting for the outgassing to ir it's was still coming out for rs'... and could go on for icipal scientist Mike A'Hearn rs at a Monday news confer-

Impact team had estimated g machine-sized impactor h a hole anywhere from the ise to a football stadium, de- the composition of the ice.

w that we created quite a believe it penetrated quite e know we'll get a good look rior," Project Manager Rick id on Monday. "We just have scientific information to go ne next few months." *Reuters*

nificant troop withdrawal from tan, the Financial Times report- pokesperson stuck to the official s long as necessary to support rational shake-up involving the military operations is likely to t least two southern provinces," r reported that the plans de- ke over responsibility for peace- *AFP*

uclear security

cooperate more to track down e wrong hands, the UN nuclear ries gathered in Vienna to close terials against terrorists and he Physical Protection of Nucle- , said International Atomic En- rticular, Waller said, it does not ansported or stored for peaceful t easier to quickly locate and re- logical consequences of sabo- *Reuters*

se exile

p closer Monday toward re- n ministry granted him a new s four children, picked up his fa- ntown Lima. The document 006," Kenji Fujimori told re- father in Tokyo. The former mid a corruption scandal. Peru on charges of human rights *AFP*

n unity gov't

an invitation to join the Pales- a unity government to help him to curb growing lawlessness in his government to foster a due to begin in mid-August. nent to join a national unity gov- unity government at this late g a series of internal consulta- *Reuters*

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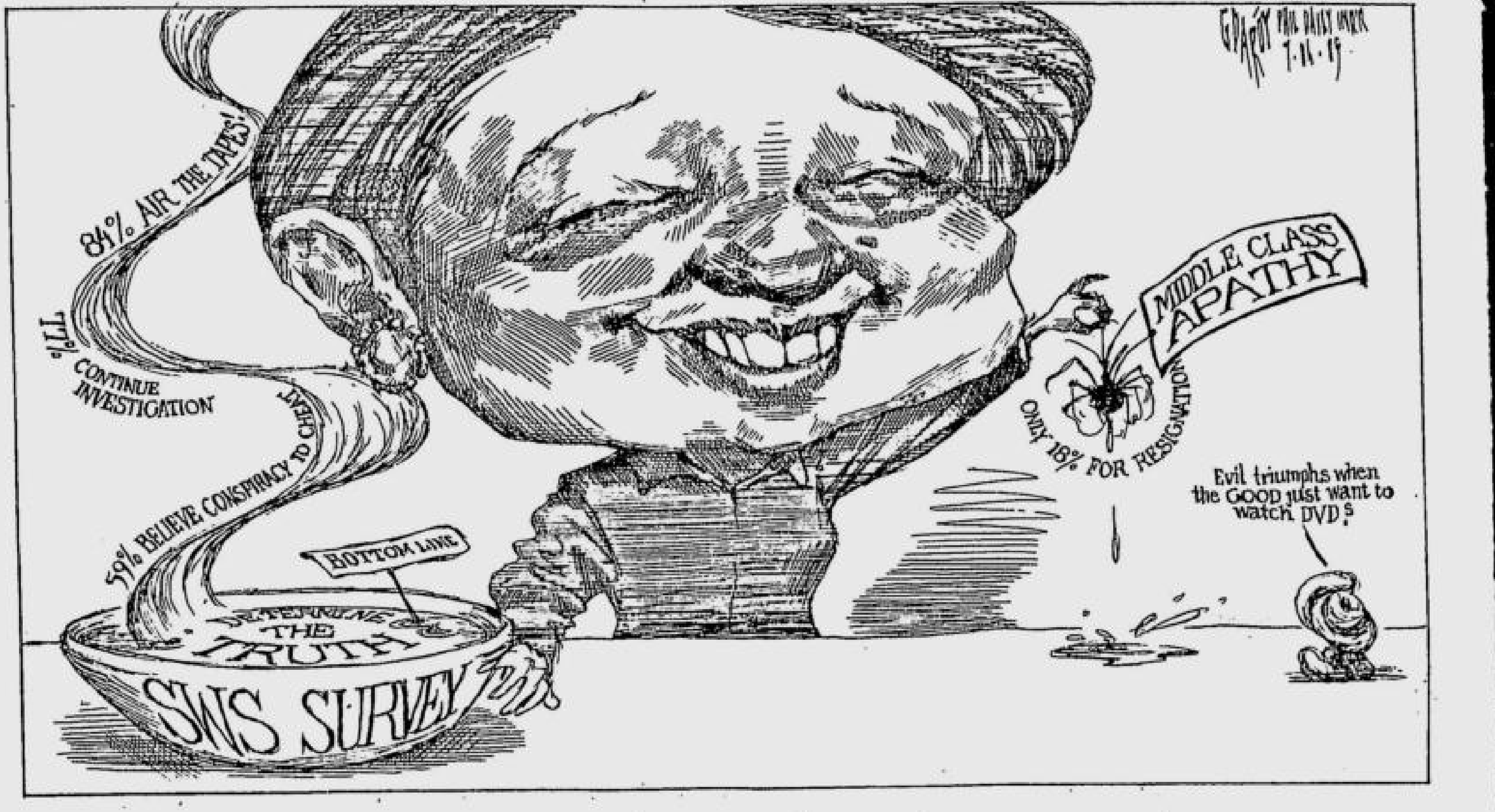
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Disquieting

EDITORIAL

THE DECISION of the Supreme Court to hand down a temporary restraining order suspending the expanded VAT law, has taken a toll on the economy. The peso has been shaken, as have the stock and bond markets. This has been a blow to the administration's efforts to bring about fiscal reforms. As a result, Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima has led an effort to effect a speedy resolution of the issue before the Court. The country cannot afford a serious reversal of its fiscal reforms at this time.

Be that as it may, it is a cause for the gravest concern that suspicions that the Arroyo administration itself pressed for the issuance of the TRO have not only been entertained, but actually believed. That the administration could be considered capable of sabotaging one of the centerpieces of its economic reform program, in order to secure a breather from the unpopularity of the measure, indicates the low regard into which it has fallen and not only as far as the usual sectors critical of all its actions but also the business and other sectors.

To suspect the administration of choosing political expediency over the long-term fiscal health and credibility of the country is not only an indication of a problem of confidence. To think that the Palace is capable of such a thing is also to assume the Supreme Court is susceptible to pressure—a grave slander not only on the President and her economic team but also on the Supreme Court. And yet, we cannot entirely blame who entertained such suspicions because even Purisima was said to have told the President during last Friday's Cabinet meeting that he hoped the TRO was not a Palace move.

Purisima's actions last Monday should show that whether his initial suspicions were accurately reported or not, he feels confident that he has the backing of the President as he tries to put the new VAT law back on track. Suspicions of the administration playing fast and free with the economic prospects of the nation should, after all, be easily countered by the fact that it was the opposition that petitioned the Supreme Court to declare the law unconstitutional. Occam's Razor, the logical principle that the simplest explanation is most likely the best, suggests that the Court did what it was asked to do by the parties opposing the law.

However, now that the Supreme Court has entertained objections, and its actions have in turn been appealed by the finance secretary, it is incumbent upon the Court to act judiciously, yet swiftly. During these politically turbulent and economically perilous times, the country cannot afford to have a judicial Damocles' sword hanging over its head. The country deserves to know, at the earliest possible time, whether the VAT law is constitutional or not, because the government cannot afford to be left in a legal limbo while economic pressures continue to mount.

The law was a politically unpopular consequence of past fiscal decisions of this administration and those that came before it. It is concededly a very painful measure which is intended to accomplish a necessary end, which is to help narrow, if not eliminate, the budget deficit as well as keep in check its mounting debt. As it is, the actions of the petitioners asking the Court to intervene have had very real consequences in terms of dampening foreign investor confidence and damaging the country's standing in the eyes of foreign fund managers and credit rating agencies. If the administration is to face the possibility of reversal by the Court on this issue, then it needs a chance to attempt remedial measures as soon as possible. If, however, the law stands constitutional scrutiny, then it also deserves to move ahead with its fiscal measures, now already made more difficult by the Court's freeze order.

After initially being poised to enjoy a honeymoon with foreign fund managers and investors, the administration has now experienced yet another setback. While those who oppose the law may have increased their popularity at home, they have earned the country not even brownie points abroad. Either way, it is the public that is losing.

If the Palace unscrupulously torpedoed its own law, this sends a chilling message to the President's economic team and the entire country. If opposition to the law was calculated to pander to the public, then it was irresponsible and cynical. Either way, the public is suffering.

IT expert shows how cheating was done

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

IN THE JUNE 20 column, we wrote here: "There is one easy, sure, simple and acceptable way to disprove the charge that President Macapagal-Arroyo cheated in the 2004 elections… And that is to open the ballot boxes, beginning with those from the places mentioned in the tapes. If the recount shows that GMA won 'fair and square,' it would prove she did not cheat even if those conversations (in the wiretapped tapes) did take place….

"If I were GMA and I knew I did not cheat, I would ask the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET) to recount the votes in those places to remove any doubt as to my victory….But if I know that I cheated or my people cheated for me, why, I would use every means, fair or foul, to prevent or delay a recount."

Last Monday, Malacañang proposed an independent commission to do the recount. Does that indicate that GMA is confident the recount would not reveal any cheating? Perhaps. Except that a commission whose members are appointed by the President would not be credible. It has to be the PET.

At last Monday's Kapihan sa Manila where the panelists where House Minority Leader Francis Escudero, Rep. Imee Marcos and information technology expert Roberto Verzola, I asked them if the opposition would join the administration in petitioning the PET to reopen the electoral returns in selected places. Escudero replied that they would. In fact, that was what they were asking during the canvassing of the certificates of canvass (COCs) by Congress but the majority members stubbornly refused, dismissing their every motion with the curt "Noted," he said. That was also their purpose in filing the two election protests, which were dismissed by the PET. He expressed doubt, however, whether the PET would allow it since the President and Vice President have already been proclaimed.

Marcos said, however, that there is no precedent for such a situation and that such a move may be an option that the PET, which is composed of Supreme Court justices, may agree to since it would solve the present crisis that threatens to throw the nation into chaos. Indeed, I think the justices should not be too technical but should exercise good sense and statesmanship and agree to such a petition since both sides want it anyway.

Malacañang has a sensible proposal: No lawyers from either side at the recount. Lawyers will only delay the proceedings by their constant objections and debates. But this is one case where speed is imperative. The faster the recount is finished, the better.

So if the administration and the opposition sincerely want a recount, then there is the solution to the present crisis. The two sides should prepare the petition to the PET immediately.

* * *

Reopening the ballot boxes would also show whether the third panelist at Monday's Kapihan is right or wrong. Roberto Verzola, an IT expert and former Namfrel volunteer, showed in a PowerPoint presentation how the cheating was done. The way he explained it, it was quite easy and simple. But in an ironic twist, Namfrel, which was accredited by the Comelec to be the citizen's arm to monitor the elections and counting to prevent cheating, seems to be a part of the conspiracy, Verzola said. Not the whole Namfrel, he quickly added, but only some of its officials.

In brief, it was as simple as counting the votes from GMA bailiwicks faster to establish a trend. Then Namfrel stopped its tabulation when only 82.98 percent of the votes were counted and GMA was ahead both in the Namfrel and Comelec counts. By stopping the tabulation at that point, it was made to appear that GMA had won. Thus, when the official Comelec count, based on doctored COCs, was completed with GMA ahead of FPJ by 1.1 million votes, it could not be compared with Namfrel's count because Namfrel, whose count was based on the more reliable election returns, had stopped counting.

Verzola compared the official Comelec (Congress) and unofficial Namfrel tallies. The Comelec tally is considered complete with 32.3 million votes counted. GMA's lead over FPJ is 1.1 million votes, 3.48 percent of total votes.

The Namfrel tally is only 82.98 complete with 26.4 million votes counted. GMA's lead over FPJ is only 680,922 votes, or 2.59 percent of total votes. When Namfrel stopped counting, there were still 4.1 million uncounted votes. Assuming the percentage share of each candidate in the terminal report as their percentage share in the uncounted votes, then FPJ edged GMA by around 359,488 to 599,456 votes. Combining this with GMA's earlier lead of 515,598 votes gives either a GMA win of at most 156,110 votes or an FPJ win of at most 83,858 votes. It was a very close fight, Verzola said. Either candidate could have won.

These results suggest, Verzola said, that "to give GMA a 1.1 million lead, her party had to cheat by 1 to 1.2 million votes."

"If we accept that Namfrel's ER-based tally is closer to the truth," Verzola added, "then widespread cheating occurred in Mindanao, changing the Mindanao winner from FPJ to GMA."

The comparisons showed that in provinces where GMA lost in the Namfrel tally, she won in the Comelec tally. For example, she lost by 19.2 percent in the ARMM per Namfrel but won by 31.3 percent per Comelec tally, or a discrepancy of 50.5 percent. In the whole of Mindanao, she lost by 1.5 percent per Namfrel but won by 6.0 percent per Comelec, or a discrepancy of 8.4 percent.

Per Namfrel's count, FPJ won in four of the six regions of Mindanao, and in 9 of 16 regions nationwide. But this was totally reversed in the Comelec count where GMA won in four of six regions in Mindanao and in 9 and 16 regions nationwide.

Garci's handiwork?

Abad lesson

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

ASKED by the INQUIRER if Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's apology last Monday had any educational value, Education Secretary Florencio Abad said it did: it gave a lesson in humility that would soon be propagated in schools. "I guess the important lesson we can draw here is, if you make a mistake, you own up to the mistake," he said. "That's a good lesson for our students, especially coming from the highest official of the land."

Indeed, Abad said, the President did not just stop apologizing for her mistake. "By way of penance, she did not just own up to a lapse in judgment but promised to do things to restore public trust and confidence in her leadership as well as in her administration." The lesson in humility will be incorporated in classroom discussions in public schools. "One of the things the President has emphasized, and which we have allocated several subjects for, is values formation in elementary and high school."

What can I say? Heaven help our kids.

I used to like Butch Abad. I defended him during Corazon Aquino's time when he was rejected by the Commission on Appointments for being "biased." Talk of lessons, this is one country whose leaders teach the most perverse things to their people. Can anything be more perverse than finding the secretary of agrarian reform unfit for his job because he is pro-farmer? It was the same thing with Bobbit Sanchez whom Cory fired as labor secretary, under pressure from business, because he was pro-labor. Abad was rejected no less than seven times by the landlord-controlled Commission on Appointments.

Unfortunately, the lesson he got from this is that if you can't lick 'em, join 'em, and he has since been joining rather than licking iniquity. The same thing also unfortunately happened to my friend Nene Pimentel who, after being victimized in 1995 by Juan Ponce Enrile who introduced the practice now known as *dagdag-bawas*, decided to go for the winner, Erap, and found himself sharing the same stage with his tormentor—Enrile also ran under Erap. Abad and Pimentel gained much political clout and lost much moral one. Now there's a very good lesson about the true essence of winning and losing. Or about gaining the world and losing a soul.

I myself have always asked what we were teaching the kids by keeping GMA in power. But to have the education secretary actually propose to make GMA worthy of emulation by elementary and high school kids, it takes my breath away. There are lessons to be learned from GMA's apology, but none of them is of the stuff the much maligned public school teachers, who also serve as protectors of the vote, are likely to approve of. What lessons are these?

One, never admit to a crime unless you are forced to. For weeks, Malacañang tried to deceive the public by saying variously that the tape was doctored, that GMA was the person on the tape but she was talking not to a Comelec official but to a local official, that we don't really know who was in the tape at all. Ignacio Bunye would later retract his admission that it was GMA on the tape, saying he wasn't really sure, his copy was not the original. From experience, he said, he couldn't recognize his own voice from a copy of a copy. He forgot that he wasn't dealing with a cassette tape but with a CD and that, as every high school kid knows, burning does not degrade an audio file but produces an exact clone. Which is a good lesson about knowing what you are talking about before you open your mouth.

The bigger lesson, of course, is that if you are a student and you doctored your transcripts to get a scholarship, never admit to it even after being found out. Unless you can no longer hold out.

Two, after you admit a crime, make sure that you yourself prescribe your own punishment. What did GMA propose after she admitted to committing the worst possible crime of a president, which was to call up a Comelec official while he was busy counting votes? "I want to close this chapter and move on with the business of governing." The President has confessed to a crime, notwithstanding that she calls it "a lapse in judgment," but it is not up to the people she wronged to prescribe her punishment, it is up to her.

So now, if you are found to have doctored your transcripts to get a scholarship, all you have to do is apologize to school officials, demand that they stop their *kakulitan* in questioning your right to be in their school, and say, "I want to close this chapter and move on with the business of studying."

Three, if you have committed a heinous crime, propose a punishment that is not only disproportionate to the crime but voids the crime completely. By way of penance, Abad says, GMA promises to be a better leader. But what is the crime? The crime is that she has no right to be the leader of this country in the first place. The crime is that she stole this country's leadership by cheating in the elections. The correct penance for that is not resigning for being a usurper? The correct penance for that is not doing time—with or without the company of her spouse—in Muntinlupa? The correct penance for that is upholding the lie with the promise to change?

So now, if you've admitted to cheating your way to a scholarship, you don't need to give it up, least of all to the *labandera's* kid whose place you took by claiming to be indigent. You don't need to be expelled from school for being the living embodiment of all that the school abhors. All you have to do is promise to study harder. All you have to do is promise to do things to restore the school's trust and confidence in your being a scholar as well as a student. And you'll be put up as a paragon of virtue, an ideal for values formation.

Ah, but Mr. Abad, sir, don't you think that is such a bad lesson?

Rosales does a political balancing act

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

STEPPING into the vacuum left by the late Jaime Cardinal Sin, Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales has asserted the moral authority of the premier archdiocese in the Catholic Church hierarchy in the Philippines. He has tried to steer the Church away from excessive and hysterical political activism in the midst of turmoil over the scandals lashing the government of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

In a pastoral letter read in all of Metro Manila's parishes on July 1 and read in parishes all over the country last July 3, Rosales broke his silence on the political crisis that seems to be leading the country close to the edge of chaos, and called on the faithful to take the middle ground of political moderation and restraint. The message represented a political balancing act for the Church which has been divided by the crisis as deeply as the political class. The crisis has left the Church leaderless in much the same manner as it has found the political opposition and other groups, which have sought to cut short the term of the President, without a unifying leader.

Rosales' pastoral letter defined the "fundamental principles that should govern our search for solutions to our present crisis." In it the archbishop outlined three important themes:

"First, let us remember that the offended cannot simply be consoled by expressions of regret. Forgiveness does not eliminate the need for justice, nor should it block the search for truth. Genuine forgiveness demands more than an apology, and those who seek forgiveness should be ready to to be called to accountability."

This point refers to the President's apology that she made a "lapse in judgment" in talking over the telephone to an official of the Commission on Elections regarding the election results in certain localities. The letter suggests that the archbishop did not find the apology sufficient to defuse the crisis and that the controversy had to be taken to an institution where the President can be held accountable for her intervention in the electoral process.

The second point sends a message that the Church abhors the idea of resolving the crisis through extra-constitutional means. "The pursuit of truth regarding the grave charges against leaders and officials should be conducted within the provisions of our Constitution and should respect the laws of the land," the letter said. "Any proposition that disregards our constitutional and legal systems weakens our institutions and paves the way for a graver instability that can cause more profound suffering of our people."

The third point emphatically rejected violence as a mode for resolving the crisis. It said that "any proposed solution ... that relies on, or leads to, violence is unacceptable. Violence harms the innocent and inflicts wounds that will take generations to heal."

Rosales prayed that "in these confusing times when people are easily swayed by emotions and led astray by quick-fix solutions, may cooler heads prevail." He went on to warn: "Let us not fall easy prey to those self-seeking politicians from all the different political parties, who have held the country's future hostage to their ambitions."

The moderate position taken by the archbishop sought to give balance to the Church's position at a time when contending factions in the hierarchy have sought to hijack the Church's direction. A group of radicalized bishops have been trying to drag it into a partisan political alignment and into movements seeking another people power revolt to topple the Arroyo government.

The pastoral letter was a disappointment to a group of bishops who have gone beyond just exposing social ills—in particular, *jueteng*—to engage in political action and join the chorus of regime opponents demanding the President's immediate resignation. If they expected the archbishop to endorse their activism, the letter clearly repudiated that role. The letter marked the first magisterial assertion of the archbishop of Manila, as the most influential spiritual leader of the Church in the Philippines, to define the political direction of his leadership, differentiating it from that of Sin.

The current political crisis provided the moment in which Rosales could define his tendency. The issuance of the pastoral letter indicates that he has seized that moment to call for the moderation of the Church's political role. The tenor of the letter indicates that the archbishop has resisted the temptation to follow in the footsteps of Sin and that he is veering the Church away from the overtly interventionist model set by the cardinal.

Rosales, through the pastoral letter, has sent a clear signal to lesser bishops that he is not a clone of Sin and that he is depoliticizing the Church from too much interventions in secular politics.

Rosales' decision to moderate the political involvement of the Church came in the midst of the confusion about its role in the crisis, stemming from the fact that, following the eruption of the scandals over jueteng and the taped conversations, a number of outspoken bishops have expressed different positions on the crisis.

The pastoral letter marked an attempt by the archbishop of Manila not only to stamp his authority and leadership on the hierarchy but also to give the Church a single authoritative voice as it seeks direction in this time of crisis.

Not just the problem

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

KOBE—Perhaps the most visible, if not voluble, group of participants at the Seventh International Conference on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific are the transgenders, transvestites, male and female sex workers and men who have sex with men. They pop up in the corridors, dining rooms and meeting areas of the Kobe International Conference Center in feathered boas and net stockings, fully made-up and sporting outlandish wigs, on their way to mounting a daily lunchtime show, adding sparkle to an AIDS March or just asserting their presence at the symposia and oral sessions.

It's easy to lump them all in one homogeneous group, a common mistake. But activists in their community are now beginning to assert the distinctions among themselves. "Men who have sex with men (MSMs) are different from transgenders, and not all MSMs and transgenders are sex workers," insisted Tini Slamah of the Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers.

Why is it important to recognize and respect the differences within this community of marginalized and stigmatized men and women? Because their separate, specific and unique circumstances call for separate, specific and unique responses.

At the session called "Sex Workers: We are Here, We are Everywhere," presentors gave a glimpse of the community's complexity and variety. Dr. Garrett Prestage from Australia shared a portion of the preliminary findings of a study on "Health in Men" that dealt with "risk and sex work" among gay men. Among the conclusions: "Sex work itself is not risky behavior," for in commercial sex, both the customer and sex worker are more likely to use protection. It's when sex is casual, consensual or between acquaintances that the partners are more apt to throw caution to the winds. A person's tendency to take risks—linked to youth, a low income, use of illicit drugs, and being part of the "party boy scene"—is more likely to predispose him to risky behavior.

* * *

IN CAMBODIA, researcher Phal Sophat pointed out, MSMs are grouped into two categories: the "long hair" and the "short hair." The "long hairs" are more visible, more open to declaring their sexual preferences through "dress and attitude." The "short hairs" would be considered still "closeted," and are in fact called "the hidden men." (The difference between a gay man and an MSM is that, while the gay man chooses to acknowledge and assert his sexual orientation, MSMs may not necessarily think of themselves as homosexual, sometimes engaging in sex with another man for money perhaps or convenience.)

A study conducted among more than a thousand MSMs, Sophat said, proved that it is not so easy to determine who among the MSMs are engaged in "sex work" and who among them are exclusively "clients." Not all men who trade in sexual pleasure do so for material rewards, though "long hairs" have a particularly hard time finding jobs because of discrimination. Some men "sell sex" to meet wealthier men who would give them "opportunities," others simply to "prove they are attractive." While men who pay for sex do so not just for pleasure but also for "the chance to choose their sex partners," or "to assert their socio-economic power."

* * *

ONE of the major developments in the decade or so of struggle against the spread of HIV/AIDS is the realization that sex workers, viewed in the early years as a "problem" and even "blamed" for the spread of the disease, can actually be partners with the medical community, civil society and even government in this life-and-death battle.

"Sex workers can make an important contribution to HIV prevention programs," Dr. Carol Jenkins noted in her paper on "Sex Trade in the 21st Century." Contrary to their image of "victims" who are helpless before customers who refuse to use condoms, they have shown, said Jenkins, that "they can manage their clients and their commercial sex activities."

Just as there are many different kinds of sex workers—different genders, sexualities, status and arrangements (commercial and establishment-based, informal or free-lance, casual, temporary)—then, too, should there be a multiplicity of approaches.

But certainly one approach that has proven quite effective is the organizing work among sex workers themselves, and their empowerment—not just in demanding condom use, which many still think is their only "problem"—but rather in advocacy for legalization and de-criminalization, or just to get police off their backs, for improving their working conditions, and especially in crafting communication messages for the public and other sex workers and deciding and implementing programs for their community.

* * *

IN THE FOREFRONT of the sex workers' rights movement in the region is the APNSW which embarked on a project called "Making Sex Work Safe" involving sex workers themselves in planning and creating communication tools on safe sex using their own words, their own images, and sometimes their own bodies.

The last the APNSW has been doing here, in an outrageous "Cabaret" of dance numbers, including a sexy number straight out of Bollywood. For the Fourth of July presentation, Tonette Lopez of Gahum-Philippines performed "Enough is Enough," clad in a dominatrix outfit, shouting at the end "Mr. Bush Enough is Enough!" Outrageous theater meets political commentary, indeed.

While taking part in a workshop in Cambodia, Tonette, with help from an Indonesian colleague and set to music by Rollie Janairo, a Filipino musician, composed a hymn for the network with a simple message: "We too are humans!/We feel, we cry, we laugh, we love,/ like the way you do!/We still dream, we still believe, we shall survive!"

Don Fernando de Alimudin

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

VISITS to Manila by foreign heads of state follow protocol that has been handed down for centuries.

Some years ago, I consulted the original documents preserved in the Records Management and Archives Office on the 19th-century visits of the Duke of Edinburgh, the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia, and even King Norodom I of Cambodia (grandfather of Norodom Sihanouk who visited Manila in the 1960s). These documents reveal the preparations and expenses for this hospitality. We know where they went, what they ate and how Manila changed. For example, carriages were not allowed to cross the suspension bridge for the duration of the visit so that there would be no accidents (falling into the Pasig was a regular happening) that would give the city a bad name.

If only we had extant documents for even earlier VIP treatment like that accorded Mohamad Alimudin, Sultan of Jolo, in the mid 18th century. Nick Joaquin has written that the drama form, *moro-moro*, probably dates from this time.

Taking a cue from Nick Joaquin led to the trail of a person not recorded in our textbooks. Mohamad Alimudin became the Sultan of Jolo in 1735 when his father Maulana abdicated. He was educated both in Jolo and Batavia, was fluent in Arabic and Malay, and was so conversant with the Koran that he was acknowledged as "Chief Pandita of the kingdom."

Alimudin negotiated peace with the Spaniards in 1737, leading to the opening of Jesuit missions in his territory and the return of Christians taken on slave raids. In May 1740, Recollect Fray Hipolito de San Agustin was abducted by people the sources described as "Moro pirates." Through the intercession of a certain Pandita Yaloc, the friar was recovered and taken to Jolo where he was cared for. Probably to reimburse expenses, the price for the friar's freedom was set at P12,000. Jesuits negotiated and committed the Recollect province to cough up the ransom, but later haggling brought the price down to P1,000.

Alimudin stopped slave raiding from Jolo, which was not taken well by some of his men whose livelihood depended on this human traffic.

Aside from Alimudin, the Spaniards also negotiated peace with the Sultan of Tamontaca and thus we have the famous Jesuit mission there. These two sultans aided the Spaniards against raids from the Tirones from the Bornean coast.

However, Alimudin did not live happily ever after. Allegedly smitten by one of his concubines, he neglected to rule. His brother, Bantilan, hired an assassin for six slaves and a thousand pesos that only resulted in an unsuccessful attempt, with a lance thrust into his brother. In September 1748, during a rebellion in Jolo, Alimudin was overthrown and he escaped to Zamboanga where, in gratitude, he presented the Spanish governor and other officials with gifts that included 40 male slaves, mostly from Papua New Guinea, dressed festively for the occasion.

He moved on to Manila where he and his entourage of 70 people (including three concubines and an undetermined number of slave girls) were well received by the governor who later persuaded Alimudin to convert to Christianity. Naturally, Jesuits were charged to convert him. He urged the Archbishop of Manila to baptize him saying, "I will turn Christian, let the Spaniards take Sulu, send the stubborn datus to Zamboanga; make me king there. I will then oblige everyone to embrace your religion."

People were divided as to his motives. The pious saw sincerity in his conversion while others thought it a shrewd political move. Anxious, the bishop delayed the baptism until Alimudin showed proof of his sincerity. He was sent to Binalatongan, Pangasinan, but was taken ill on the way and thus on April 29, 1750, Alimudin was baptized by a Dominican in Paniqui, Tarlac.

He returned to Manila as Fernando I—Don Fernando de Alimudin—and was greeted by festivities that included comedies, dances, fireworks and bullfights.

Friar accounts of Alimudin are obviously biased but make engaging reading. For example, a Jesuit report reads in part:

"At his arrival [in Manila] the artillery was discharged; and he was lodged very magnificently in a house provided beforehand for this purpose, outside the walls of Manila [in Binondo], with a continual guard of soldiers, whose captain was always under the orders of the sultan. The entry of the sultan into Manila was arranged with so much pomp and ostentation that everyone said no more could have been done for the entry of the prince of España if he should come to Manila; but that is less [than the reality]. The governor, seeing a scarf woven with pearls and ornaments of gold, immediately his eyes and his heart went out toward the scarf and the many other pearls and jewels which he knew the sultan carried. At this, the governor entirely closed his eyes to all information that was given to him ... openly saying that he placed more confidence in the king of Jolo than in the [Jesuit] fathers who sent information."

Different documents, different ways of seeing the same person who remains, at best, obscure and hidden in history. Don Fernando de Alimudin is worth further research. His story is good enough for a movie or even a musical.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Biking by the bay

CLOUDS toned down the sunset last Saturday at Manila Bay, but even if it had been in its full splendor, I would have been too exhausted to appreciate it. I had spent an afternoon with nearly-one-year-old Yna, who insisted on doing archaeology, digging up grass and pebbles and shells… and tasting the artifacts.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

Jepoy eventually arrived to rescue me. As I handed Yna to him, I told him I was wiped out, hoping to gain some sympathy, and a quick trip home. Instead, he suggested we go biking.

Cultural biking

I told him he was crazy, but Jepoy insisted, arguing that he wanted to take me on another one of those tours of his world. He loves the Baywalk and other places I go to, but sometimes describes them as "*burgis*." He's right about the Baywalk: an afternoon out with the family can cost a few hundred pesos even for light snacks.

But Jepoy doesn't mean bourgeois in terms of expenses alone; instead, he says it to mean that while *burgis* areas are fun, the more *masa* (for the masses) places are even more enjoyable. And many times, he's proven himself right, from walks through "Little Baguio" (an area in Quezon City with a large community from the Cordilleras) to the explorations of Quiapo's alleyways (and I don't mean the DVD places alone).

Jepoy was, of course, right about our coming from different worlds. I would go to the Cultural Center for concerts, plays and exhibits but Jepoy has never been into the Cultural Center building, and isn't too keen about going. Culture with a big C isn't his bag; for him, and I suspect for many Filipinos, the Cultural Center is a place for leisurely promenades… and biking, with relatives, even the whole clan. Once when Jepoy told me he'd brought his grandmother as well, I was incredulous, but he insisted the biking place was for all ages.

No lone riders

As usual, Jepoy got his way despite my protests: "Look, Yna's really sleepy." But as we approached the bike park, she perked up almost as if she had gotten a quick recharge from the noise levels that were building up. And as we got out of the car, she became even more animated. Yna loves people and here they were, lots of them, young and old.

There were the usual food vendors offering everything from *pusit* to *balut* (to strengthen the knees for biking, I presume). The food stalls were clean; even the cat sleeping away in one of the kiosks seemed to have taken a bath.

And there was the biking, but I quickly realized it was a different kind of biking than you'd see in the West. The bikes here were all for rent. There were small bicycles for children, some with trainer wheels to help the novices. There were also slightly larger bikes which in the West are really intended for pre-teens but which we call adult bikes here.

But what struck me immediately was that there were few lone bikers. In the same way a Filipino does not dine or drink or sleep alone, I realized biking's a social activity in the Philippines, something you do with hordes of friends and relatives.

It probably makes sense. First, one has to learn to bike, and that's a social activity, except that Filipino-style, you don't have one teacher. You can see that at the Cultural Center, with kids at different stages of learning to bike. Some had an older relative pushing the bike from behind with the rest of the clan assuring the child all would be fine. Others had become more confident, biking around gingerly while the relatives cheered them on. Finally, you had the ones who had mastered the bicycle, speeding along and threatening to crash into the food stalls while the mother or grandmother would holler, "*Ingat, ingat* (Careful, careful)!"

Social biking

Besides the "practice biking," there was a lot of what I'd call social biking. People would rent a bike and then take turns using it. Sometimes, you'd see a bike taking a driver plus one or two passengers (I'm amazed at how our small Pinoy bikes can take so many people but then in parts of Mindanao, you have Skylabs: motorcycles that transport four passengers at a time).

For the most part though, social biking at the Cultural Center is best done on side cars and go-karts, modified bikes with an attached seat for several passengers. These bikes offer all kinds of possible social interactions, usually a younger person biking, with several family members as passengers. There's a sense of importance here as a young boy or girl becomes the family driver, almost as if to say, "Hey you taught me to bike; now I'm going to drive you around." It's on these side cars and go-karts that a child displays *kuya-* or *ate-*prowess, assuring the younger passengers, "I'm taking you places."

Other kids have older relatives as passengers…and now, I could believe Jepoy seeing a kid, who couldn't have been more than 10 years old, asking her passenger, sitting regally in the sidecar: "*Saan tayo, Lola* (Where to, grandmother)?"

Strangely, but not surprisingly, there were more adult women—mothers, aunts and grandmothers—than men. The women weren't there to be biked around; they were also the ones teaching the young ones to bike. I've asked the question before, and I'm asking it again: Where have all the fathers gone?

Bike therapy

"You can forget your problems here," Jepoy explained. I could see why: there's something about biking that, pardon the cliché, uplifts the spirit, whether you're the actual biker, or a spectator. Even Yna seemed totally mesmerized just watching.

I wondered what was running in her head and whispered, "It won't be long before you go biking, too." Then I remembered my own childhood experiences with biking: the awkwardness and uncertainty that accompanied the first attempts to bike, the growing confidence as I learned to balance myself, and the feeling of exhilaration and accomplishment once I could bike on my own. The riding experience itself varied, depending on whether you're riding against, or with the wind, whether you're on level ground or going down or up a hill.

I thought it would be great if the Cultural Center could provide some variations on the terrain so people can bike "uphill" or "downhill" but then again, it's the social biking that seems to appeal most to the families that gather here, a time to unwind, to set aside problems.

Biking as therapy? Why not. But there are probably limits, As I went around asking about the rental rates, I realized this wasn't quite a "for-the-masses" activity. The cheapest kiddie bikes cost P20 an hour while the go-karts and side cars went for P50.

Jepoy feigned shock when told about the rate for the go-kart, protesting in Tagalog: "It was P30 before. Have you been affected by E-VAT?"

She laughed and said no, there was no VAT on rentals and offered us a bike for P40. But the reference to VAT seemed to have touched a raw nerve, the vendor saying, "*Grabe ang* VAT *na 'yan*."

Key to making pupils really read

DECLINING news readership, as observed by Belinda A. Aquino in her column (PDI 6/5/05), is a carryover of the kind of teaching done in the primary and secondary levels. Basically, all subjects are reading subjects. The poor grades in English, Math and Science can be attributed, therefore, to the poor reading ability of the students due to the ineffective way reading is taught.

One must know the nature of reading to teach pupils to read effectively. Reading is expressed in two related concepts: (1) reading is a series of complex processes involving a variety of activities; (2) the reading performance of the individual is influenced by personal factors—physical, emotional, mental and social.

The crux of reading is expressed in the first concept. The series is made up of (1) recognition, (2) comprehension, (3) reaction and (4) integration. When these four reading skills or dimensions are fully covered in the teaching, good readership is enhanced.

Let me illustrate by using this line from the INQUIRER: "Who can argue against P35 billion profit?"

If this line is flashed to anyone to be read and it is indeed read, it can be said that the one who read it can recognize the printed page. This is the initial skill or reading dimension. Good readership does not end here. It should move on to the next dimension.

Comprehension. This means the ability to read above, between and below the lines. It involves analysis, the ability to draw meanings from the sentence. What ideas, information or situation can be inferred from the statement?

In the example, the following can be drawn: the President does not like to dismiss the present manager; she is politically indebted; more anomalies might be brought out if the manager is removed from office. These ideas are gleaned through comprehension. From here, the reading skill should proceed to the third dimension—reaction.

Reaction follows easily if comprehension is developed. It may take the form of rejecting, accepting or believing the ideas, implied or expressed, to be true, feasible or applicable in one's daily life.

The fourth and last skill or dimension is integrating the meaning of the selection into one's behavior, activities or thinking. This series of complex menial processes should be fully developed to produce good readers. Aside form the materials used, personal factors such as health, mental, emotional and social should be considered.

If effective readers could be produced by diligently observing the nature of reading in teaching, the educational standard in the school could be improved. The teacher is the key to this. Books, chairs, good rooms and complete school facilities all contribute to make the environment conducive to learning, but only the teacher can provide the needed stimulus to make the pupils react and respond. One learns by doing.

—PEDRO G. ORILLE,
president,
Agoo Senior Citizens Association,
Senior Citizens Center,
Rizal Park Compound,
Agoo, La Union 2504

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Rome lost to vices

VICE should not be legalized. It is a source of all evil.

The Philippine Charity Sweepstake Office was created by the government to support charitable institutions like the Quezon Institute, to suppress the deadly disease, tuberculosis, which afflicted President Manuel L. Quezon. The casino and other forms of vices should not have been approved. Many families have been broken because of gambling.

I congratulate my former student, Archbishop Oscar Cruz, for his courage in leading to eradicate *jueteng*, although it is part of the Filipino culture. As former Education Secretary Alejandro M. Roces said, Filipinos will only engage in games of chance. In cockfighting some husbands love their roosters more than their wives.

Children start with cards and matchsticks. The common expression in the Philippines is "*pustahan tayo* (let us bet)."

Gambling is a form of vice. When one loses in gambling, he will give his shirt away. Rome fell because of vices.

—LT. COL. JULIAN
M. MALONSO, PA (ret.),
92 New York St. Cubao, QC

Snap elections not the answer

SNAP elections, as suggested by Conrado de Quiros (PDI, 6/14/05), may seem to provide the answer to the question from the likes of Rep. Prospero Nograles, who think nobody else can lead this country but President Macapagal-Arroyo. The fact is—we don't need proof beyond reasonable doubt here—elections, Philippine style, gave us all the presidents (and local officials, too) we did not deserve—from Marcos (I can't speak of those before him because I wasn't born then) down to GMA.

I say this from the standpoint of ordinary followers (like me) who were born in poverty, grew in poverty and, if this electoral system gives us again another undeserving president, will surely die in poverty. For the likes of me who are from the so-called grass roots, the issue is far more than whether GMA cheated or not; cheating being the general rule rather than the exception in our political system. Neither is the issue about whether a president is a Harvard graduate or a movie actor.

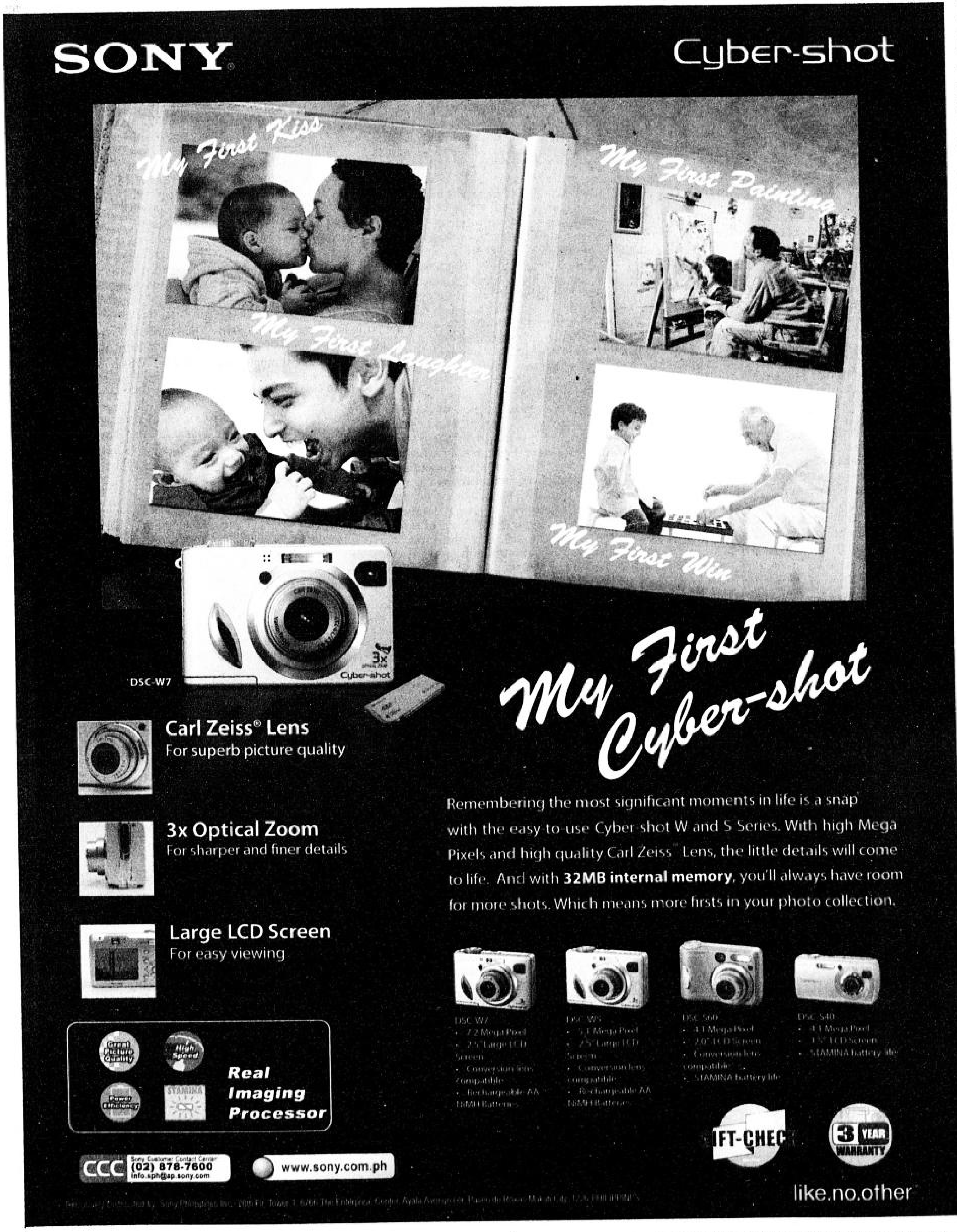
The issue is whether or not a leader can effectively come up with policies that will elevate our standard of living to a decent level; that can stop the exodus of breadwinners to other countries; that can lead to building good roads, highways and bridges whose quality is at par with those of the expressways in the United States; that can bring healthy food on the tables of every family; that can stop the *padrino* system in getting a government job; that can give decent homes to everybody in much the same way that the US government helps realize its residents' "American Dream"; that can stop, or lessen, significantly stealing of government money and properties; and, not the least, that can stop cheating in elections.

Again, I share these concerns from the standpoint of ordinary Filipinos who are content with just being followers, who have no ambitions of ever attaining political power. After all, what are leaders without us followers?

I don't want to argue with those who think there's nobody else who can replace GMA as President, or with those who are suggesting the holding of snap elections, or with those who are instigating people power.

Snap elections, people power and the conventional methods of changing leaders are now like blunt swords which, without our knowing it, we have been striking rocks with. Why not focus more on the end rather than on the means? This way, we can avoid circuitous means and attain our goals faster. And because the goals are not as easy to achieve as we had thought, we have to reach them in much the same way that a rocket needs to be launched in order to reach the heavens. If a communist takeover cannot be the speedy means in achieving our goals, could military dictatorship be a better way?

—ADRIAN QUINONEZ,
Adrian_quinonez@yahoo.com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Ideological abomination in the New People's Army

THE INQUIRER is relatively balanced and unrelenting in bringing to the public's awareness the truth behind any social, political and economic issues. We send this letter to clarify our position on the issue of same sex marriage in the underground revolutionary movement.

The members of the underground Internal Revolutionary Ethics Committee within the CPP/NPA/NDF abhor this decadent and immoral practice of our homosexual comrades. As Marxist-Leninists who adhere to the principles of creating a new man—ideologically, politically and culturally—the encroachment of gay culture into the communist movement is an unacceptable violation of the party's precepts and class standpoint.

Gay party cadres and functionaries who are now openly practicing their trade even in the ranks of the New People's Army are an ideological and cultural abomination. They reveal our leaders' hypocrisy in dealing with the decadent social behavior in our semi-colonial and semi-feudal society.

We wonder if this is the living legacy of comrade Pepe Luneta. As veteran cadres of the revolutionary movement, we are privy to the liberal policy of directly accepting homosexuals into the party roster, mainly from the show business industry. We are pointing to this ideological and organizational flaw as the culprit behind the proliferation of sex opportunism within the movement, without ignoring the individual flaw of our Utrecht based chair.

Ever since we became full party members, we are told that we are bound to undergo an ideological process of remolding our petty-bourgeois habits and inclinations toward becoming a "New Man" whose world outlook, standpoint and viewpoint have absolutely discarded the old-class structured social practices of our class enemy, the big bourgeoisie. But we were wrong!

Within the revolutionary movement, many comrades have failed to discard their old petty-bourgeois lifestyle, thus maintaining their liberalism which is abhorrent to our proletarian practice and commitment. The much ballyhooed same sex marriage officiated by the NPA is the worst liberalism ever committed, and rampantly being committed, within the revolutionary movement.

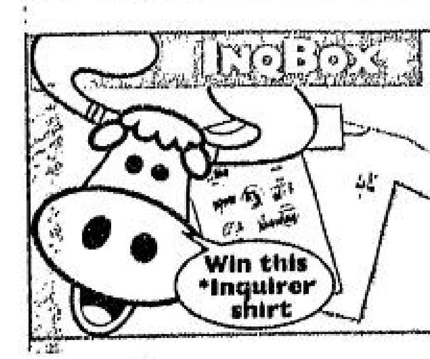
—ELIAS RAMIRO DIAZ,
spokesperson,
Internal Revolutionary Ethics Committee
(IREC CPP/NPA),
Bondoc Peninsula, Quezon,
irec_erd@yahoo.com

What's a sea lion doing in the presidential seal?

SOME TIME last week, I took a look at the presidential seal and I noticed two things: (1) It features 84 stars, exceeding by five the number of our provinces (79); (2) On the red triangle portion of the seal, there is a portrait of a sea lion.

My curiosity was aroused, so I would like to pose this question to the people at the National Historical Institute: What significant role did the sea lion perform in our country's history to deserve a space in the presidential seal?

—PAUL R. MORTEL,
MBLA Court,
Malanday, Marikina City



INQBOX Question of the Week

Will you participate in a new People Power uprising? Why or why not?

Senders of d best 20 texts as publishd in Tuesday's **INQBOX** *wiL each receiv an "Inquirer Shirt!!*

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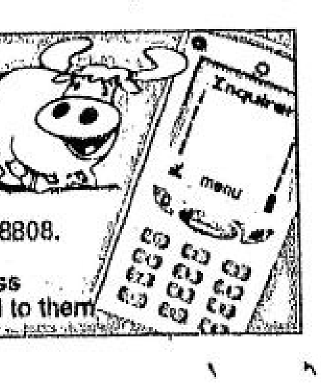

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ROUNDUP

MILF attack hurts 2 teens

CAMP SIONGCO, Maguindanao—The military said Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels violated the ceasefire agreement when they attacked soldiers at a checkpoint in Guindulungan, Maguindanao, wounding two Muslim teenagers. Maj. Gen. Agustin Demaala, Army's 6th Infantry Division chief, said the rebels attacked the checkpoint manned by soldiers from the 64th Infantry Battalion around 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday. But Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said the rebels did not fire a shot. *Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Statue prayed for

BACOLOD CITY—Devotees in Talisay City, Negros Occidental have been praying for the return of the head of the 70-year-old statue of St. Nicholas, which was stolen inside the church on June 25. They held vigils and processions, praying for the return of the image's head or information on where it is now. "St. Nicholas has greatly helped Talisaynons, especially in their spiritual life. The head of his statue is priceless," said parish priest Joey Naranja. Witnesses said they saw two men, one of whom had a backpack, walk out of the church at about 1 a.m. of June 25. *Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Council feud

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—A judge here has blocked the attempt of two aspirants to assume the vacated seats in the town council of Solano. Judge Jose Rosales of the regional trial court nullified the appointments of Philami Galima-Uy Lim and Ferdinand Beting to fill up vacant seats in the council. Lim and Beting, who were recommended by former Gov. Ruth Padilla, took their oaths as councilors on March 15 through an appointment by Gov. Luisa Cuaresma. But four councilors questioned their appointments. *Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

World mayor nominee

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Mayor Oscar Rodriguez is among 65 nominees for the 2005 World Mayor Award, according to the award organizer, the independent and non-commercial Internet platform City Mayors (www.citymayors.com). Rodriguez, a human rights lawyer and former Pampanga representative, was the only nominee from the Philippines and one of nine from Asia. Rodriguez was asked to send a paper to organizers to describe the steps he took to make San Fernando a more liveable city. The world mayor project, according to its website, aims to "raise the profile of mayors worldwide as well as to honor those who have served their communities well and who have made contributions to the well-being of cities nationally and internationally." The winner will be announced in December. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Councilor's mom slain

NAGUILIAN, Isabela—The mother of a councilor here was killed when she and her son were ambushed in Barangay Surcoc on Saturday night. Police identified the fatality as Esther Pascual, 63. Her son, Councilor Dandydios Pascual, 41, the president of the Association of Barangay Captains here, suffered bullet wounds in the forehead and body and was taken to the Faustino Dy Sr. Memorial Hospital in Ilagan town. Senior Supt. Percival Barba, Isabela police director, said the Pascuals were on their way home at 11 p.m. when a group of men waiting along a road in Surcoc shot their Mitsubishi van. *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

BSP exec killed

TUGUEGARAO CITY—The regional branch manager of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas was shot and killed by a lone gunman on Thursday night while he was on his way to an eatery in Barangay Centro here. Fidel Alvarez, 56, of Malabon, Metro Manila, died from a bullet wound in the head, police said. They ruled out robbery as the motive as the victim's wristwatch, cellular phone and wallet were not missing. *Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Trader shot dead

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—A still unidentified gunman shot dead a real estate broker in front of his office in Tanauan City on Thursday. Chief Supt. Jesus Versoza, Calabarzon police director, identified the victim as Raymundo Landicho, 47, a resident of Barangay Leynes, Talisay, Batangas. Versoza said the victim was talking to his friend Danilo Mendoza at around 4 p.m. when the suspect shot him at close range. The victim was hit in the head and died instantly. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Dalandan tops in fair

CITY OF CALAPAN—The Dalandan concentrate of the Socorro Highland Agrarian Reform Community won as best product during the first national trade fair held on June 7-13 at the SM Megamall during the 17th year anniversary of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. It won in the fruit juice category, said Ester Pag-ilagan, agrarian reform program officer II. *Madonna T. Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

College conversion endorsed

CITY OF CALAPAN—Representatives Rodolfo Valencia and Alfonso Umali have filed a bill seeking to convert the Mindoro State College of Agriculture and Technology in Victoria town into a university. The bill also proposes graduate and post-graduate programs that include open learning, short-term courses for agriculture and forestry, fishery and environmental studies, business, information and computer technology, arts and sciences, and other courses. *Madonna T. Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

2,000 mahoganies planted

CITY OF CALAPAN—About 2,000 mahogany seedlings were planted in two villages in Baco, Oriental Mindoro in observance of Arbor Day on June 24, according to Amor Asi, information officer of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Oriental Mindoro. The DENR said there will be a memorandum of agreement with the barangay officials for the care of the trees. *Madonna T. Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Bacolod priests await CBCP decision on 'Gloriagate' tape

BACOLOD CITY—Priests of this city's diocese are divided over whether or not to support calls for President Macapagal-Arroyo to resign, a reflection of the Church's own division on the issue.

The priests have decided to just wait instead from official word from the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) before taking a common stand on Ms Arroyo.

Fr. Aniceto Buenafe, head of the Social Action Center of the Bacolod diocese, said the 50 priests who met on Monday had varied positions on the scandal now hounding Ms Arroyo.

As a result, he said, the priests decided to wait for the CBCP stand, which was expected to be out July 12.

In the meantime, the priests were exhorting the faithful to pray for a peaceful end to the crisis, he added.

Ms Arroyo had admitted calling up an election official during the canvassing of votes in the May 2004 presidential elections that she described as a "lapse in judgment."

Witnesses also surfaced in a Senate investigation to link her husband, son and brother-in-law to "jueteng."

Representatives of civil society in Negros Occidental were also divided on whether the President should stay or not, said peace advocate Delia Locsin.

Locsin, of the Paghiliusa sa Paghidaet (Unity for Peace), said she personally wanted the President to stay in power.

She said nation's problems go beyond the President.

"I ask that we all pray and listen to what God wants us to do," she said.

But Bishop Emeritus Roman Tiples Jr., of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, said the only way to forgive and pardon Ms Arroyo was "ask her to resign as reparation to the nation and to the Filipino people."

He said under the Arroyo administration, poverty worsened.

"There is also unlimited foreign plunder of our national patrimony, failure to stop massive fraud and graft... and the killing of activists and journalists," said Tiples.

He said the President also continued lying. *Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

IF THE SHOE FITS
A man clutching used shoes made in Korea roam the streets of Davao City. BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Robbers try to blow up police station in Baguio

BAGUIO CITY—Armed men tried to blow up a police station near Kennon Road here with grenades on Monday, in an attempt to flee after hijacking a group of small scale miners and stealing P1.3 million.

Only one grenade exploded, but it missed the station altogether. PO3 Roger Comites was hit in the forehead by a shrapnel, but he joined the pursuit operations.

One of the assailants was seriously wounded in a gunfight, according to a Baguio police official.

The other grenade was found inside a taxicab that the robbers used to escape.

The armed men intercepted 22 miners on Kias Road here at 1 p.m. as they prepared to motor back to Barangay Acupan in the mining town of Itogon in Benguet.

The group had just sold 2.3 kilos of gold to a Kias trader.

Duty officers of police station 8 on Kennon Road said they immediately set up a checkpoint when the Kias robbery was reported to them.

Police were approaching the taxicab, which stopped at the checkpoint, when its passengers hurled the grenades.

Policemen shot one of the armed men in the back, but he and three other armed men ran down Kennon Road for 80 meters before jumping into a ravine and running straight to a local subdivision. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Cops arrest members of private army run by ex-councilor

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Police Monday said they arrested six members of a private army run by a former Calamba City councilor and seized various firearms in a farm in Alfonso and Magallanes towns in Cavite.

In a news briefing, Chief Supt. Jesus Versoza, Calabarzon police director, presented suspects Roberto Tomalon, 26; Cesar Tanseco, 41; Francisco Dazo, 49; Candido Mondido, 27; Jhunwel Sumaray, 26; and Dominador Cutamora, 28.

"The arrest of these persons is part of our continued efforts to thwart criminal activities in the Calabarzon area," Versoza said.

Versoza said policemen raided the CB Vergara Farms in Barangay Kaytitinga II, Alfonso and Barangay Ramirez, Magallanes at around 8 a.m. on Monday.

Seized from the suspects were four 12-gauge shotguns; four cal. 30 Carbine rifle; one .45 cal. pistol; two magazines for M-16; one magazine for cal. 45 pistol; 16 rounds of ammunition for .45 cal. pistols; and five rounds of ammunition for shotgun.

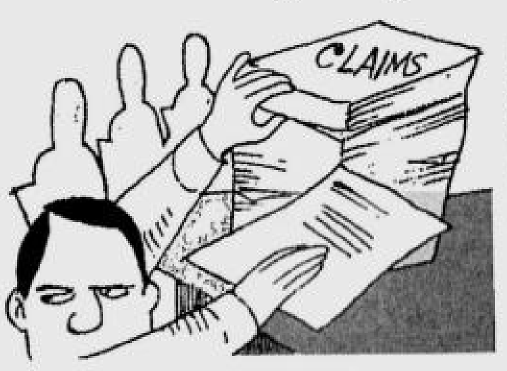
He said the simultaneous raids on the farm owned by Severino Vergara, a former city councilor of Calamba and now head of the local Department of Social Welfare and Development office, were covered by search warrants issued by Cesar Mangrobang, of the Imus regional trial court.

Vergara, he said, was using the arrested persons as his private army in his chicken breeding farm.

He added that residents in the area have been complaining of rampant indiscriminate firing in the area.

Dazo said Vergara personally handed the guns to them. *Madonna T. Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Macapagal surname surfaces in fraudulent expropriation



ARAYAT, Pampanga—Fraudulent claims amounting to P5.3 million comprised this year's P60.3 million in right-of-payment funds tagged priority by the National Irrigation Administration for farmlands damaged by the operations of the Japanese-funded Cong Dadong Dam in Pampanga and Nueva Ecija.

The bogus claims consisted of two lots at the dam's Area 5 in Barangay San Mateo and 16 lots along canals in Barangay La Paz Turo, both in Arayat, according to NIA documents provided by a source who on Monday reported the alleged anomaly to the agency.

"Those (lands) were not submerged or occupied by the dam," the source, who asked not to be identified, said. He added that the claimants there were either backed up or used as fronts by armed men.

Jaime Paquio, chief of NIA's contract administration, said the source volunteered the information.

One of the supposedly single biggest dubious claims belonged to a man surnamed Macapagal.

It was not immediately known if this claimant was in any way related to the late President Diosdado Macapagal. The P3.4-billion dam was named after the late president in 2003 on the clamor of local officials.

The dam was fully operational in October last year, after almost 20 years of delay due to protests by farmers, the 1991 eruptions of Mt. Pinatubo and new designs.

Ernesto Bielza, irrigation superintendent of the Pampanga delta development project, had approved the latest right-of-way allocation, which is part of the P69.3 million the government allotted as counterpart in the project.

Administrative officers Gloria Macadaeg and Emmanuel Vendiola prepared and submitted the list, a copy bearing their signatures showed.

The payments were due to 542 farmers in Arayat, Mexico, Sta. Ana, Candaba and San Simon towns in Pampanga and Cabiao town in Nueva Ecija. The list indicated they had "complete documents."

Paquio said the list was returned to the PDDP office in Pampanga for revalidation, assuring that no payments had been made.

Documents previously obtained by the INQUIRER from municipal and barangay officials showed big discrepancies in the size of lands reported damaged by the dam and its operations in the Arayat areas. Field visits did not show these to be submerged. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
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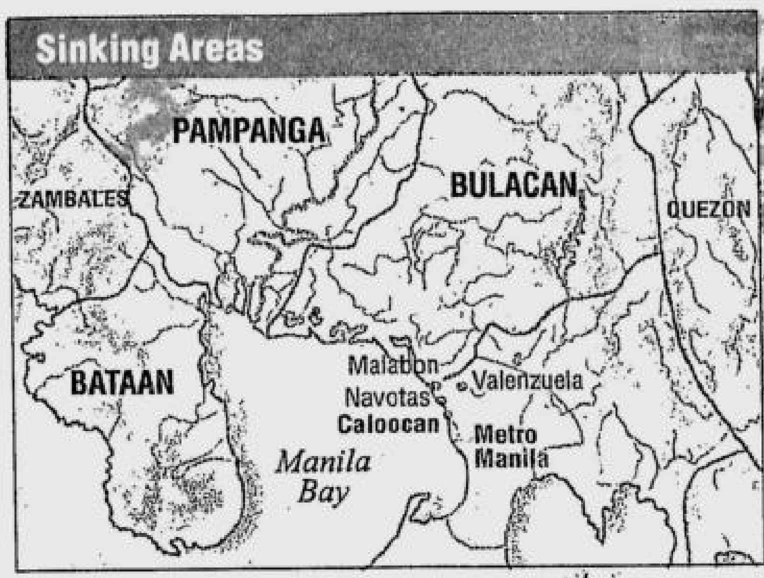
Gov't scored for ignoring Metro, C. Luzon sinking

By Tonette Orejas
City of San Fernando

THE GOVERNMENT has yet to stop the excessive use of groundwater, the main cause of the rapid sinking of coastal plains of four Metro Manila cities and three Central Luzon provinces, according to two geologists.



A SCAVENGER carries scrap materials as he crosses a flooded street in Malabon after yesterday's heavy downpour. ERIK ARAZAS

Dr. Kelvin Rodolfo and Dr. Fernando Siringan, both of the National Institute of Geological Sciences of the University of the Philippines, said they alerted local and national officials about the problem four years ago.

They said areas north of the Manila Bay—Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela (Camanava) in Metro Manila and Pampanga, Bulacan and Bataan in Central Luzon—are sinking at rates more than 10 times faster than the rise of oceans.

Global warming causes oceans to rise at 2 millimeters yearly, while subsidence in the northern Manila Bay villages was occurring at rates of 1.7 to 8.3 centimeters yearly, they said.

Their eight-year research, which began in 1997, showed that the sinking has led to worsening floods and tidal incursions in coastal communities or deltas.

Rodolfo is also a professor emeritus of the department of earth and environmental sciences at the University of Illinois.

In the latest paper they wrote on the problem, Rodolfo and Siringan observed that officials were "reluctant to accept our findings… even though these have been independently verified by geodetic data collected by the government's own Department of Public Works and Highways."

The paper is titled "Public and governmental reluctance to recognize regional subsidence, a major anthropogenic cause for worsening floods around northern Manila Bay, Philippines."

Selective

The DPWH, Rodolfo and Siringan said, was "also very selective in how it applies the subsidence evidence, either minimizing its importance or ignoring it altogether."

In their assessment, government efforts "favor short-term political contingency over efficacy."

"Local politicians build wells to court votes. Wealthy and politically connected fishpond owners, in addition to hindering drainage by illegally encroaching on estuaries, are major users of groundwater and do not allow monitoring of their pumpage," they said.

The government also pursues "expensive but ineffective dredging and flood-control projects funded with foreign loans [that] are vulnerable to corruption."

Government engineers and foreign engineering consultants, on the other hand, "ignore, deny or minimize the implications of their own geodetic confirmation of rapid subsidence."

The areas in which subsidence is taking place are wide, spanning 3,000 square kilometers.

Flat and very near the sea level, their supposed one-meter elevation extends 10 to 20 km inland. Southwest monsoon winds (*habagat*) and typhoons dump a maximum of 4,000 mm of rains from May to October. The winds raise tide levels, stopping floodwaters from draining to the bay.

While the Manila Bay delta areas have been naturally subsiding at rates similar to two deltas in Italy and the United States, the local situation has been hastened by the pumping out of groundwater, which causes the land surface to sink, Rodolfo and Siringan said.

"Every coastal metropolis in the world where groundwater has been withdrawn at rates greater than recharge experiences serious subsidence," they said, citing the case of seven Asian cities that have dealt with serious floods related to sinking.

In the northern Manila Bay areas, groundwater is obtained for fishponds, plantations and recreational facilities, such as golf courses and swimming pools.

They cited the need for government assistance in measuring subsidence in illegally built fishponds, saying they were met there by private armies.

"In the meantime, we can only speculate that fishpond pumps may cause as much land subsidence as it does in the Yun-Lin area of Taiwan, where extensive fishponds use so much groundwater that they have caused the land to subside 0.66 m from 1989 to 1997. This equates to an average rate of 8.2 cm yearly, either coincidentally or significantly, virtually equal to the 8.3 cm yearly occurring at a fishpond area in Bulacan," they said.

Floodwaters rose by 0.2 meter in Bulacan and the Camanava area and 0.3 meter in Bataan and Pampanga from 1991 to 2002. Tide levels went up by as much as the same heights in those 11 years, and took a day to ebb.

AMRSP

AMRSP JOINT BOARD STATEMENT

" …your faithful ones pray to you in time of distress…" (Psalm 32: 6)

Once again, our beloved country is rocked by political turbulence and crisis. In this situation of confusion and unrest, we, the Joint Executive Board of the Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines (AMRSP), wish to share with our members and all people of good will our discernment of positions and principles to guide our common search for truth and justice.

We believe that any solution to our present crisis must be governed by the Constitution and the laws of our land, for the sake of the future of our country and the good of our people. We reject any solution that involves violence.

We call for accountability to the nation on the part of the President. We find her admitted phone conversation with a Comelec Official reprehensible and unworthy of the Office of the President. We don't consider it a mere lapse of judgment especially given the context and the frequency. This goes deeper and casts a shadow on one's personal integrity. An apology is not enough. Our people have a right to know the full truth. To this end, we support the creation of a constitutional and independent body, composed of women and men of proven integrity, who will swiftly and impartially determine for the nation the authenticity and true meaning of the tapes. If injustice has been done, appropriate reparation must be demanded of its perpetrators.

We believe that there is a need for refocusing of everyone's attention on what really matters: the plight of our people, especially the poor. We therefore call for speedy and authentic reforms, especially for the sake of majority of our people who suffer from the lack of food, clothing, shelter and education. Alleviating the plight of the poor, of those who suffer, especially during these hard times of increasing costs of energy, high prices of basic necessities and massive unemployment must be given priority. Issues that affect the lives of the poor, such as the foreign debt, the destruction of the environment caused by logging and mining, land reform program delayed and denied, high prices and low wages, must be seriously considered. Violations of human rights such as summary killings and intimidation must be decisively addressed. Government and its institutions, such as the COMELEC, the Cabinet, and other government agencies and corporations must be quickly purged of corrupt elements.

In a situation of confusion and heated emotions, we call on our members and all people of good will to remain sober, vigilant, and carefully discerning. We join our sisters and brothers in the Church, bishops, religious and lay people in calling for prayer, discernment and in keeping alive the spirit of hope in this seemingly hopeless situation. We believe that these troubled times call most of all for prayer and discernment. We need to beg for God's help, for the light God alone can give us, so that we can find solutions that will truly be for the lasting good of our people, especially the poor. The times too, call for penance and conversion, for each of us, is, in a sense, a part of the problem, as well as part of the solution to the ills of our country.

Because of this, we invite all our members and brothers and sisters to make July 7 - the 113rd anniversary of the founding of the Katipunan - and July 16 - the Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel - special days of prayer and fasting in our communities for a true discernment towards truth, justice and peace. We are convinced that, if we turn to our loving God, we shall find the light, strength, and hope we need, to move forward again as a people, to help create the future that this good and gracious God so desires for our suffering people.

July 5, 2005

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Sr. Ma. Luz Mijares, OSA Br.

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PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Nonformal education reaches hinterlands

By Delmar Cariño
La Trinidad, Benguet

BASIC education continues to elude the Cordillera's remote upland communities due to poverty and geography, but the Department of Education is trying its best to bring alternative education to these hinterlands.

The remote villages where no schools exist include Aeta settlements in San Isidro and Zumiguin, and rebel returnee communities in Marag Valley, all in Luna town in Apayao.

Through the so-called "alternative learning systems," the region's education officials have given the task of fighting illiteracy in the remote areas to mobile teachers who walk 10-20 km to reach their places of assignment.

Dr. Agapito Delmas and Dr. Gloria Felipe, education supervisors of the DepEd regional office in Benguet, said the Cordillera has 27 mobile teachers who render at least 40 hours a week of nonformal teaching.

The teachers walk through mountains and forests to reach children and adults and teach them basic math, reading and communication, Delmas said.

He said the teachers tried to visit even the region's five farthest towns—Tinglayan in Kalinga, Sadanga in Mt. Province, Tinoc in Ifugao, Kibungan in Benguet, Tineg in Abra, and Calanasan in Apayao.

Felipe said the absence of schools in the remote villages had continued to cause a dent in the achievement of a 100-percent literacy level in both elementary and secondary education in the region.

Delmas said the DepEd's nonformal education had been restructured and renamed "alternative learning systems" to become more adaptable to the learning environment in the remote areas.

"The pedagogy (teaching method) used is community-based where basic and functional literacy are taught in the phonetic language using indigenous materials," he said. Teaching language includes the use of the vernacular so the teacher could communicate better with the students.

To help the mobile teachers, Delmas said they brought 36 prescribed sets of literacy modules prepared by the DepEd.

The students must complete 200 hours of basic literacy and 800 hours of "accreditation and equivalency learning" over the five strands of the alternative learning system—communication skills, problem solving and critical thinking, sustainable use of resources or productivity, development of self-confidence and sense of community, and expanding one's world vision.

Since the approach is nonformal, the subject areas are taught using practical approaches that reflect the daily life of the people in the community, Delmas said.

GOD LIVES OUR HOME

MOLINTAS EV ESPIRITU

Flower portraits connect people to Dot's life

By Vincent Cabreza
Tubao, La Union

FILMMAKER Romy Suzara wanted very much to do a movie about amateur still-life artist Paz Natividad "Dot" Infante-Molintas because her life story is so rich in texture that would overdose soap opera addicts.

Born to a rich Bacolod City family, Dot left it all to be with Miguel Molintas, a Baguio City pony boy.

Dot refuses to make that chapter of her life public, but she remembers living a happy, if underprivileged, life, until she bore Joshua, who suffers from a cornucopia of congenital diseases that affect his heart, kidneys and spine.

Now a 17-year-old man with the mind of an 8-year-old, Joshua hardly talks because of a cleft palate that was only recently corrected. He stopped school when doctors realized his immunity system could not deal with a crowded environment such as classrooms.

Both parents struggled to get their son medical attention, while nurturing three other boys, but their tragedies seemed to manifold.

Dot began to manifest the slow, crippling agony of osteoarthritis. Her three sons stopped school. They lost their home to finance Joshua's medical bills.

"Nothing was left. Even my husband lost his shoes," Dot said.

She maintains a small house on Gibraltar Road in Baguio, near Wright Park where pony boys tend to their horses, although donors have given her a 200-square-meter lot where her sons raised a box-like home.

Suzara had telephoned Dot about securing her film rights, after he stumbled on one of the published news articles about Joshua's struggles. Dot declined the offer.

But when Miguel died from a heart attack in 1994, Dot realized that she had nothing left to offer her children, except for an easel and some paintbrushes, remnants of a childhood fascination.

So the beleaguered mother decided to make the brushes pay her way.

Dot had been rushing day and night to build a museum-full of her paintings to sell and raise funds for Joshua's continuing medical needs.

She finished her first 30 portraits of Baguio summer flowers, Benguet's forests and wild Ibaloi horses in two months, fearful that her arthritic hands would soon fail her.

These paintings are now on display at the Manila home of a friend named Ophie, awaiting a chance to go on exhibit.

Should an exhibit be possible, the curious will find paintings that reveal Dot's desperate need for a miracle.

Heavy, ochre-bright shades of gold consume her landscapes of Baguio and childhood memories of Bacolod shorelines, and pastels color her flowers. Her horses are ghostly apparitions rising from a Baguio forest that never existed.

On days when her back pains stab too deep, Dot paints in bed.

Her canvas propped from one side, Dot just finished a portrait of a palomino she used to own. At one point in 2004, she completed two paintings in a single day.

"Sometimes, I feel so much guilt, because we spend too much time attending to Joshua, we may have neglected our other children," Dot said.

"Michael [my eldest] works at [a fast-food restaurant], while Mark works as a waiter in Dubai. Jules Byron (JB) has continued his father's trade renting out our three horses," she said.

The paintings have restored "my dignity because for the first time, I am offering something to donors that comes from my soul," she said.

Putting Things in Perspective.

So That The Public May Know

On Saturday (2 July) and Monday (4 July), some major publications gave wide publicity to a complaint of fraud filed by GSIS President Winston Garcia with the Securities and Exchange Commission against certain EPCIBank directors. The following facts will clarify the issues raised by Mr. Garcia.

1. Amb. Roberto Romulo, in law and in fact, has all the qualifications and none of the disqualifications of an independent director. He has never been an officer or employee of EPCIBank or any of its subsidiaries or affiliates. Equicom Systems Management (ESM) is not a subsidiary or affiliate of the bank. Amb. Romulo's appointment as independent director has been confirmed by both the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the Securities and Exchange Commission.

2. EPCIBank has made and continues to make donations to foundations or non-government organizations that espouse charitable, civic, and other noble causes. It believes that any foundation in honor of the late statesman Gen. Carlos P. Romulo is worthy of support. Nevertheless, neither EPCIBank or its subsidiaries and affiliates have made any donation of whatever amount and in whatever guise to the Romulo Foundation for Peace and Development or the Carlos Romulo Foundation, as Mr. Garcia has claimed in the media.

3. The Go family has not voted in their favor the Bank shares owned by EBC Investments. The nominees of the family to the Board of Directors of the Bank have been elected because of their shareholdings (25.2% of total shares) and the proxies voluntarily given by minority shareholders who have consistently given their support to the family since the Bank's founding by the family patriarch, Mr. Go Kim Pah. As a group, they are the single biggest private shareholder of the Bank.

4. EBC Investments, while an EPCIBank subsidiary, has the sole authority to determine how its EPCIBank shares shall be voted. The Board of Directors of the EPCIBank cannot direct the EBCII Board of Directors on how to perform their functions; neither can they partition the shares as Mr. Garcia has demanded. This position is supported by independent opinions issued by four reputable law firms who are all experts in corporate law.

5. Equitable Bank Foundation is not owned by EPCIBank as claimed by Mr. Garcia. It used to be known as the Go Kim Pah Foundation, when it was established by the Go family in honor of the Bank's founder. The shares of the Foundation in EPCIBank come from the holding companies owned by the Go family.

6. GSIS was not disenfranchised in the regular stockholders' meeting in April last year. Two GSIS representatives were elected to the Board of Directors of the Bank. Three months later, one of its nominees resigned. Its nominee for replacement of the resigned director could not be admitted to the Board for lack of the proper qualifications. The Board then decided to constitute the position of a third independent director to further strengthen its good corporate governance program.

The record and performance of the Bank over the past few years testifies to its high standards of corporate governance. EPCIBank was adjudged Best Domestic Bank by The Asset, a prestigious regional financial publication in its 2004 Triple A Country Awards, and named as a 2005 Gold SuperBrand in the Philippines by Readers Digest in its annual consumer survey. It posted a net income of P1.8 billion for 2004, a 39% increase in net income. It has paid out dividends in the amount of P436 million this year. Its shares have notably appreciated in value in the stock market over the past 12 months.

Nilo T. Divina
NILO T. DIVINA
General Counsel & Corporate Secretary
Equitable PCI Bank

Equitable PCI BANK
Your Bank of Choice

Garci: Yes, I talked . . .

From page A1

Legarda, then senatorial candidate Mar Roxas, Minority Leader Francis Escudero on behalf of his father Salvador, an opposition senatorial candidate who lost in the election.

Before the election, Garcillano said, he also talked to then senatorial candidate Jamby Madrigal.

No favors

Garcillano said they did not ask favors from him and simply voiced their concern about possible fraud.

"Tell the people that the conversations that have publicly come out of the tapes are untrue," said Garcillano, speaking from an undisclosed place in Mindanao. "Many of those conversations were doctored," he said.

Garcillano specifically referred to a portion in the conversations in tapes released by the opposition purportedly showing that he was assuring Ms Arroyo of a one-million vote margin.

"I did not say that, I categorically deny that," Garcillano said in his telephone call made as a House investigative panel was playing one version of the tape submitted by Alan Paguia, former counsel of deposed president Joseph Estrada.

He said he had been reluctant to come out, pointing out that with the flood of speculation sweeping the country he had lost credibility before the public.

"The people are biased. I never did anything to destroy the electoral process. I am not that stupid," he said.

He said at the proper time he was willing to come out and confront his accusers.

House finally hears Paguia tapes

By Michael Lim Ubac

LAWYER Alan Paguia yesterday sought to establish President Macapagal-Arroyo did not win last year's election in a manner that was fair and square as Malacañang had insisted.

Paguia was subjected to intense grilling by administration supporters in the joint investigation of five House committees but he stood by his belief that the controversial wiretap in his possession showed a high-level conspiracy involving the President, the Commission on Elections and the military to rig the balloting.

The lawyer of deposed President Joseph Estrada told Quezon City Rep. Nanette Castelo-Daza he was sure the voices of Ms Arroyo, Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano, First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, among other officials, were the ones in his recordings.

On Taguig-Pateros Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano's query, Paguia said that although he did not have the chance to count the number of lapses in judgment committed by Ms Arroyo, they "can be criminal" in nature.

He said the officials caught on the tape violated the Omnibus Election Code and the Anti-graft and Corrupt Practices Act, which are special laws.

"The intention of a person is not important [under the doctrine of] *malum prohibitum*," said Paguia, who spoke mostly in Filipino.

At 6:49 p.m., when administration lawmakers finally ran out of questions, the two cassette tapes, each containing 90 minutes of conversations, were eventually played.

Paguia refused to identify the source of his tapes and confessed he could not determine whether they were originals because he was not an expert. But he said he was certain the voices on the tape were original.

Daza noted that the 30-minute CD, which he made out of the two tapes, was "selective only of the portions incriminating of the acts of the President and therefore designed to create suspicions in the minds of the public." Paguia said as the highest official in the land, Ms Arroyo's conversations were most telling.

He did not agree with Daza's observations that revealing the tapes' contents could "invite public condemnation or outrage" and "have repercussions that could no longer be reversed."

"I could not forgive myself if I have been given a chance to [reveal the truth] to my countrymen but did not do so," he said. He refused to reveal his source because of the confidentiality of client-lawyer relationship.

Told that the Supreme Court had suspended him indefinitely from practicing law for repeatedly questioning the integrity of the justices during a hearing, Paguia said he was rendering his services "for free," and that his client provided him the tapes for his "legal study."

Under questioning, Paguia said the shorter copy of the recordings was not spliced, fake, tampered, mangled, altered and edited as claimed by administration lawmakers. He explained that he merely selected relevant conversations "but did not alter any of the conversations."

Asked by Surigao del Norte Rep. Robert Ace Barbers and other lawmakers on the specific instances that would support his contention of vote rigging, Paguia mentioned the use of the military in Basilan to increase Ms Arroyo's votes; the removal of unsympathetic generals; and Mike Arroyo's offer to give P1.5 million to Garcillano so that his candidates will win.

Cory, Rosales seek meeting with Noli

From page A1

Thus far, Aquino has stood by Ms Arroyo amid mounting calls for her resignation and rebuffed suggestions that she lead a people's revolt to wrest power from the Arroyo administration, saying she was too old for "people power."

She visited Susan Roces, widow of the late actor and presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr., to remind her to stick to the Constitution after she joined calls for Ms Arroyo's resignation.

Susan Roces factor

Earlier, Aquino also visited Roces to commend her for her sober stance after meeting with former National Bureau of Investigation Deputy Director Sammy Ong while he sought sanctuary at the San Carlos Seminary with the "mother of all tapes."

Distance from ABS-CBN

Beltran and Bayan Muna Rep. Teddy Casiño said De Castro should prove himself capable of replacing President Arroyo.

And the best way to show the world that he can govern the country is to promptly dissociate himself from the influential Lopez clan who owns the media giant ABS-CBN, Benpress Holdings and Manila Electric Co. among other firms, they said.

Prior to his election to the country's second highest post last year, De Castro had been with ABS-CBN for 18 years. His weekly TV show, "Magandang Gabi, Bayan" endeared him to the masses and earned him the title, "Kabayan."

The two party-list lawmakers believed that the burden of proving his competence solely rested on his shoulders.

"Vice President Noli de Castro (should) show he is a worthy replacement as Chief Executive in a post-Arroyo period. He should also publicly dissociate himself from the Lopezes whom he served in ABS-CBN for many years. There is a fear that under a De Castro presidency, the Lopezes will benefit from presidential favors," said Casiño.

Independent stance

De Castro should also make known his independent stance on issues like taxes, prices of water and electricity, North Luzon Expressway toll fees and the public debt, they said.

"The people are no longer comfortable with mere cosmetic changes in leadership that maintain the status quo of corruption, immorality and anti-people programs. The first order of the day for De Castro is to immediately dissociate himself from GMA who is now the subject of growing public rejection," said Casiño.

He said De Castro should also join the clamor for Ms Arroyo to resign from the presidency because she had lost her moral basis to govern and unite the nation."

Scare tactic

"This may be a tall order for Noli, but it is of paramount importance in order to ensure meaningful reforms in the post-Arroyo period," said Casiño.

Representatives Exequiel Javier and Monico Puentevella said House Minority Leader Francis Escudero's opinion that the possible succession of De Castro to the presidency was being used as a scare tactic by the Arroyo administration was designed to create intrigues between the President and her running mate.

"He is belittling the capacity of the Vice President who has been in public service, since his days as a media practitioner, longer than Representative Escudero has. The President specifically chose Noli as her vice president, confident in his capability as a public servant," Javier said.

The two congressmen said it was the opposition which concocted the so-called "Noli scare."

Rule of succession

"We still maintain that the President's resignation is not a viable option. But we must always follow the rule of law and this means abiding by the rule of succession in the very remotest possible scenario that the President does resign," Puentevella stressed.

Business interests

Beltran also said "this country has had enough of leaders who based their platforms of governance on popularity, and is easily manipulated by big business interests. Mr. De Castro owes most of his popularity to the backing of a major media network and the same business group that runs this network."

"He cannot be expected to think of reforms that will favor the poor, much less implement them especially if the reforms have to do with the nationalization of the electric power and water industries," Beltran stressed.

He added that most Filipinos were bypassing De Castro as a frontrunner to succeed President Arroyo in the event that she is forced out of office.

Enrile admits he also talked to poll execs

From page A1

Congress.

Paguia has claimed his cassette tapes are the original wiretap.

Samuel Ong, a former deputy chief of the National Bureau of Investigation, has also claimed he has the "mother of all tapes" but he has disappeared since he made the announcement on June 10, fearing for his life. Ong's lawyers said the tapes would also be turned over to the House.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco, appearing in yesterday's investigation, also turned over copies of the wiretap which Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye had said had been delivered to his house.

Ms Arroyo has confessed hers is the voice in the tape caught talking with an election official identified by the opposition as Virgilio Garcillano. She has apologized for the "lapse in judgment." Garcillano has denied he is the man the President is talking to in the tape but his whereabouts until last night was unknown. *(Story on Page A1)*

In recent days, text messages have been circulating saying it was not just Ms Arroyo who talked to Garcillano but opposition candidates as well.

Enrile, who ran under the opposition PMP-KNP, said he talked to Commission on Election Chair Benjamin Abalos, and Commissioners Manuel Barcelona, Rufino Javier and Florentino Tuazon during the canvassing of votes.

Enrile said he called up Abalos during the canvassing when he heard there were "manipulations" of the votes.

Count properly

"That was the time when they were pushing me down again. I was (down from No. 7 to) No. 11 and I said 'I heard that there were manipulations in the field. I don't mind losing but I do not want to be cheated again and so please count my votes properly'," he recalled telling Abalos.

Enrile further revealed he also phoned Barcelona, Tuazon and Javier because there appeared to be a "trending" against the opposition candidates.

"I will not deny that I called, I call them whenever there is a problem when it comes to me but there's nothing wrong in calling a public official, they are not beyond the call of any citizen," Enrile said.

"If I have violated any law then proceed against me but I have not violated anything. I have not done any improper thing; I have not asked anybody to commit any violation of the law to perform any immoral conduct," Enrile said.

No influence

Enrile said he was just a private citizen who could not possibly influence anybody when he called up the Comelec officials.

When asked if his case was different from Ms Arroyo, Enrile said: "I don't want to judge other people." He said "it depends" on what was discussed during those calls.

"Now if there are other opposition senators and leaders (caught on tape), I demand that all tapes of conversations of all the Comelec commissioners be aired publicly so that this issue can be put to an end," Enrile said.

Sen. Jamby Madrigal, also a KNP candidate, is one of those mentioned in the text messages as having talked with Garcillano. "I don't even know him," Madrigal said in a phone interview with the INQUIRER.

Administration Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said it was within the right of any candidate to call up Comelec officials if the candidate believes the election official is involved in manipulation.

But when asked if he called up Garcillano or any other official, Biazon said: "No comment."

The taped conversations mention Biazon and ex-Sen. Robert Barbers, both administration senatorial candidates who battled neck-and-neck for the last slot. Ms Arroyo and her husband are heard telling Garcillano to help Barbers win.

Sources said that at one point when he felt his votes were being messed up, Biazon berated Ms Arroyo's operatives and threatened to expose the fraud even dragging down Ms Arroyo. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Nelson F. Flores and Leila B. Salvaverria, AP*

Related developments on issue of wiretapped conversations

- PRESS Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Malacañang had no problem with the playing of the wiretap in Congress. "The President has not committed any violation of law so why should there be any apprehension?"
- Roy Señeres, former National Labor Relations Commission chair, said if the President had not done anything illegal, there was no reason why Garcillano should not come out of hiding. "He should tell the truth and apologize," said Señeres.
- Akbayan party-list Representatives Mario Aguja and Loretta Ann Rosales, in a two-page letter, asked Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo to investigate Ms Arroyo for possible violations of the Constitution and various laws, including those dealing with ethical standards of public officers, antigraft and corrupt practices, election code and obstruction of justice.
- State prosecutors filed sedition charges against Ong for making statements last month that showed he, "in conspiracy with other people, wanted to incite the people to rise up against the President."

GMA welcomes impeachment to rebut charges

From page A1

same day by Palawan Rep. Antonio Alvarez, a member of Kampi, the President's own party.

Under the law, no other impeachment complaint can be filed against a president for a year once a complaint had been endorsed by a member of the House.

Alvarez said Lazaro's complaint could still be filed, although the complaint of Lozano had already been endorsed, because Congress was still in recess and it had yet to be taken up by the House justice committee.

Bunye said it was the view of the President that she did not commit anything wrong but because the case had been filed, "we might as well go ahead with it."

Ms Arroyo tried to put the issue to rest with a statement a week ago that she made a "lapse in judgment" by discussing the vote count with the election official.

But calls for her to quit have continued unabated, with two universities joining those who question whether she still has the moral authority to lead.

Trap

The opposition slammed the filing of the second impeachment complaint, saying that the administration was again trying to preempt them.

"The administration is employing tactics to ensure the President gets off the hook. They have again turned a deaf ear to what we've been asking—for them to stop preempting us." House Minority Leader Francis Escudero said.

Escudero has expressed wariness over the impeachment route, describing the complaint as flawed and a trap that would give Arroyo the opportunity to beat the rap.

Instead, the opposition has encouraged street protests apparently in the hope of persuading key sectors of society like the military, the dominant Roman Catholic Church and the middle classes to withdraw their support for Ms Arroyo.

Ms Arroyo's allies have a majority in the justice committee and could vote to stop the complaint being sent to the full House.

Should her allies lose any vote in committee, the complaint would go to the full House of Representatives, where a one-third vote would send the charges to the Senate for trial. There are only 15 minority legislators in the 236-member House of Representatives.

Alvarez said he endorsed the complaint so that the accusations against the President would be resolved through a legal process and not through extra-constitutional means.

"My endorsement does not mean that I'm taking up the cudgels for this complaint. I just want to provide a proper venue for this to be discussed," he said.

Alvarez said Lazaro, of Malate, Manila, was his friend and that the lawyer approached him on Monday for him to endorse the complaint.

In his 11-page complaint, Lazaro said the President's actions as shown in the "Gloriagate" tapes amounted to breach of public trust, malfeasance and misfeasance.

He said his complaint must be heard "by representatives of the people, in the House of Representatives, and in the impeachment court in the Senate, not in the street 'parliaments' or ... by military juntas spawned by coups, or other extra-constitutional means, which may lead to a dangerous interregnum in our history."

Build solid case vs GMA

The militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan warned the administration against waging a legal battle with prosecutors among a growing number of lawyers' groups which see impeachable offenses in the tapes of the President's conversations with an election official.

The faculty of the University of the Philippines College of Law, the Free Legal Assistance Group and the Committee for the Defense of Lawyers have called on Ms Arroyo to resign for allegedly violating the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code and the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

"Our country's legal minds should help inform the public on the grave crimes committed by the President. We urge them to conduct a legal education campaign on 'Gloriagate' so the people would know the extent of the election fraud done by the regime," Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes said.

Bayan also called on the organizations from the legal profession to help build a "solid case against the President."

"It would be good if the lawyers can also help in filing the appropriate cases against erring officials such as Bunye who used his public office in covering up the (Hello Garci) scandal," Reyes said.

Bayan cited a study by the lawyers' group Codal, which states that Ms Arroyo and Bunye may have violated Presidential Decree No. 1829 on the obstruction of the arrest and prosecution of criminal offenders.

The law prohibits "presenting or using any record, document, paper or object with the knowledge of its falsity and with the intent to affect the course or outcome of the investigation of or official proceedings in criminal cases," the militant group said.

Reyes said Ms Arroyo allowed, if not ordered, Bunye to present two tampered CDs along with a certain Edgardo Ruado who Bunye said was the person the President was talking to on the CDs. *With reports from Norman Bordadora and AFP*

Charter change to solve crisis

TO AVOID a violent end to the current political crisis, a ranking administration lawmaker yesterday proposed an "honorable exit" for Ms Arroyo through Charter change.

Cagayan de Oro Rep. Constantino Jaraula said President Arroyo and Congress should immediately agree to turn Congress into a constituent assembly to change the form of government from the present presidential system into a unicameral parliamentary and federal system.

Jaraula, chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments, called on the President to make the "ultimate sacrifice" and give up the remainder of her term.

He said Ms Arroyo could still remain in office but only until the election of new officials under the new system.

He also proposed that all incumbent lawmakers, except Vice President Noli de Castro and the senators elected in the last elections, serve only up to Dec. 31, 2006. All election commissioners should also resign by the end of the year before elections could be held.

Jaraula said he made his proposal to avoid the extra-constitutional and violent proposals being suggested on how to unseat Ms Arroyo.

2 BEAUTICIANS IN MALPRACTICE SUIT

Botched breast job leads to arrest

By Margaux C. Ortiz

COSMETIC surgery in the comfort of one's home may prove deadly.

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) yesterday arrested two gay men for illegally engaging in a cosmetic procedure that allegedly led to the death of one of their clients.

Jonathan Castillo, 27, a call center agent, and his assistant Jay Aquino, 22, a student, were nabbed in an entrapment on Tayuman Street, Sta. Cruz, Manila.

According to complainant Ronaldo Aguilar Sr., his 21-year-old son Ronaldo Jr. died of complications after undergoing three breast enhancement sessions with Castillo.

Aguilar said his son learned about breast enlargement through collagen infusion from a friend identified only as Lara.

The young Aguilar then underwent breast enhancement sessions with Castillo in January and February.

Ronaldo Jr., however, experienced complications on June 26 and died five days later at the De La Salle Medical Center in Cavite, Aguilar said.

"The doctor told us that people should only be given a maximum of 50 cc of collagen every six months," Aguilar said, stressing that an inexperienced Castillo had given his son 125 cc of collagen.

Aguilar then contacted Lara, who agreed to set up Castillo in an entrapment operation at his house on Tayuman Street.

Guilt-stricken

"Lara was apparently guilt-stricken because he felt that he had an indirect hand in his friend's death," the victim's father said, adding that Castillo's sessions cost P10,000 each.

Aguilar said, "People interested in undergoing cosmetic surgery, like breast enhancement, should get it from licensed medical practitioners."

Castillo denied knowing the victim as he admitted that he was not licensed to conduct the sensitive procedure.

"My clients call me to have their face or breasts improved," Castillo told reporters, saying that he learned how to conduct collagen infusions from a certain Jerlon Tadtad.

Castillo revealed that he bought collagen for P6,000 a bottle and accepted a minimal fee from his customers.

In an earlier INQUIRER report, the Philippine Academy of Aesthetic Surgery (Paas) and the Philippine Society for Cosmetic Surgery said that fake doctors charged from P5,000 to P25,000 per session, which are far cheaper than legitimate standard cosmetic surgery.

A breast implant alone should cost between P20,000 and P30,000.

Combined with the anesthesiologist and hospitalization fees, breast augmentation can cost between P50,000 and P60,000, and even up to P100,000 in high-end hospitals.

Dr. Leonardo S. Abogado, former Paas president, said collagen was an expensive material that could cost as much as P15,000 per cc.

Charges of illegal practice of medicine will be filed against Castillo and Aquino.

FX drivers ask on fare hike: How about us?

By DJ Yap

WEEKS after jeepneys and buses were allowed to increase their fares, FX taxi drivers are crying out: How about us?

FX taxis or Asian Utility Vehicles (AUVs) still cannot charge higher fares, since many of these are "colorum" or operating illegally, according to an association of FX taxi drivers and operators.

Thus, riding airconditioned FX taxis is only marginally more expensive, and sometimes even cheaper, than taking a jeepney ride, said Mark Pasada, chair of the National Federation of AUV Operators and Drivers Association of the Philippines.

Pasada said colorum FX drivers were willing to submit themselves to regulation, but the transportation board had not listened to them, even calling them "samahang colorum (colorum group)."

FX taxis are licensed to operate like other cabs and service vehicles, but many drivers still charge on a per-passenger basis.

Pasada urged Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) Chair Maria Elena Bautista to make good her promise to legalize FX routes through the so-called AUV Express plan.

Legitimate lines

The plan seeks to eliminate illegal transport operators by providing legitimate FX taxis their own line of operation that would not directly compete with jeepneys and buses.

"FX drivers are no longer earning money," said FX taxi driver Patricio Caingay of Rizal.

On the Montalban-Cubao route, jeepneys charge P30, while colorum FX taxis charge P25, said Pasada. In Metro Manila, the minimum fare for jeepneys is P7.50, while for AUVs, it is P10, he added.

In October last year, LTFRB required FX taxis to limit their passengers to five, and operate as regular taxis, a move strongly opposed by the operators.

At a press conference in Quezon City, the FX taxi drivers and operators expressed their opposition to the 10-percent expanded value-added tax, and demanded the repeal of the Oil Deregulation Law.

They said they had had enough of the government's insensitive treatment of the transport sector, warning that unless reforms were enacted, they would also take to the streets.

Malabon City solon alleges extortion at sea

A LAWMAKER from northern Metro Manila yesterday assailed alleged rampant extortion and harassment against fishermen from Malabon and Navotas in waters off Cavite.

Malabon-Navotas Rep. Ricky Sandoval also questioned what he described as indiscriminate arrests of fishermen from his congressional district caught fishing in the municipal waters of the Southern Tagalog province.

"I have appealed to the local government of Cavite to help stop the extortion activities of some law enforcers in the area, including the Maritime police and Bantay Kalikasan people," Sandoval said.

According to Department of Environment and Natural Resources Administration Order No. 17, small fishermen living in an area using boats of not more than three tons are allowed within the 15-kilometer range from the shoreline, which is called municipal waters.

Sandoval warned that the continued arrest of Malabon and Navotas fishermen could affect the supply of fish in Metro Manila.

Those arrested, he said, are required to raise P5,000 for bail or their bancas would be confiscated.

Sandoval did not provide details of his claims.

Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco said the only reports of arrests that he had heard happened three months ago.

Munti hunts down dengue carriers

By Jocelyn R. Uy

MUNTINLUPA City is at war against mosquitoes.

Dubbing its operation Aedes Habitat Monitoring, the City Health Office (CHO) has fielded inspectors to eliminate breeding grounds of the dengue-carrying mosquito, Erlinda Servillon, officer-in-charge of CHO Sanitation Division, told the INQUIRER.

"Our staff keeps an eye on our barangays and schools for possible breeding grounds of these mosquitoes," said Servillon.

Aedes Aegypti mosquitoes are the primary carrier of the virus that causes dengue fever. It is believed to feed early in the morning and late in the afternoon.

Since June, the city has adopted preventive fogging, but decided to carry out a clean-up drive first.

These mosquitoes lay eggs even in clear water in tin cans, old tires, flower vases and other water containers that are left exposed or uncovered.

Broken bottles, coconut husks and plant pots are also possible breeding grounds for the mosquitoes.

The CHO advised households to discard these items.

"To prevent the spread of dengue, mosquitoes should be stopped from laying eggs. And this could be done by making sure that neighborhoods are free of breeding grounds," Servillon said.

Fogging would be done after an area has been cleaned up, she added.

Aedes Habitat Monitoring showed that F. De Mesa Elementary School in Barangay Putatan and Soldier's Elementary School had a significant number of breeding grounds.

Rare blood type binds Marikina group

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THIS rare blood type is common to members of this group in Marikina City.

Called Samahan ng mga Dugong Bughaw, the newly launched group is composed of residents with the rare blood type AB.

The establishment of the group was spearheaded by city Vice Mayor Marion Andres, whose three children all have the rare blood type.

"Finding blood type AB is very hard. I understand the problem. Should anyone need a donor, it will take time to find one," he said in a phone interview.

His office has been sponsoring blood-typing activities in schools and communities in the city to find residents with the rare blood type.

Patients and donors

The city blood bank also maintains a list of patients or donors who have been found to have blood type AB.

According to city blood program coordinator Girlie de Guzman, only about 10 out of 100 people carry the blood type AB.

And during blood transfusions, carriers of this blood type are advised to accept blood only of the same type to avoid complications, she added.

But now that the group has been launched, finding Type AB blood donors will no longer be difficult.

"Should anyone need a donor, all we have to do is contact members of the group," De Guzman said.

The group now has about 150 members, Andres said.

To look for more members, the group will be holding a new round of blood-typing in the city. Those who will be found to be of blood type AB will be encouraged to join the group.

SO THE PUBLIC MAY KNOW

We believe that the imposition of the 10% VAT on petroleum products will help government in generating much-needed revenues to provide the public with basic services and infrastructure. While we initially made a stand in Congress against it because of the impact it would have on the prices of fuel that we sell and the ability of our people to bear the additional cost, we consider it as a bitter pill that we have to swallow and wish to make clear that we support its implementation.

We firmly believe that the new law will help reduce the entry of smuggled petroleum products into the country because the VAT system generates a paper trail that gives government a basis for ensuring correct payment of duties and taxes.

The E-VAT Law, however, contains an amendment to Section 110(B) of the National Internal Revenue Code, which limits the input VAT creditable to output VAT to only 70%.

The 70% cap has the effect of making us (gasoline station dealers) pay an additional amount to government on top of the 10% VAT that we add to our fuel prices. This additional amount is even larger than the margin that we have on our fuel sales, so we will end up with negative income.

In order to survive, we will be left with no alternative but to pass on the additional tax burden resulting from the 70% cap. This additional tax burden, on top of the 10% VAT, would amount to at least P1.50 per liter, and probably more.

Rather than pass this burden to our customers, we, the dealers' associations of Petron, Shell and Caltex, therefore petitioned the Supreme Court to grant us a Temporary Restraining Order on the provision for a 70% cap.

We see this as enabling a more efficient implementation of the E-VAT law.

FEDERATION OF PETROLEUM DEALERS OF THE PHILIPPINES

PUP teachers, students seek legit president

By Tina G. Santos

MEMBERS of the faculty, staff and student body of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) yesterday renewed calls for the appointment of a legitimate school president as they launched the "Justice for PUP Movement," a multisectoral organization, fighting for reforms at the state university.

Over the past several years, PUP has been governed only by an acting president. Its last acting president tendered his irrevocable resignation last month.

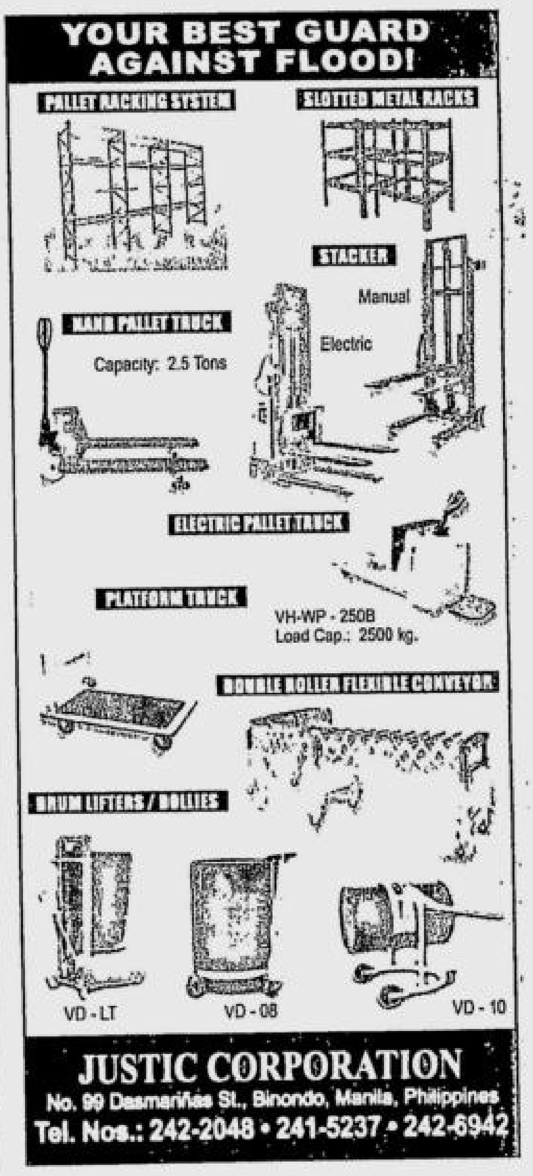
The group urged the Commission on Higher Education (CHEd) to immediately resolve the issues concerning the installation of a legitimate president, saying the process conducted by the Search Committee for Presidency in 2003 must be respected.

In 2003, PUP had three candidates, namely, Dr. Dante Guevarra, vice president for administration; Dr. Zenaida Pia, a regular professor, and Dr. Orlando Molina, reportedly an "outsider" who came from the private sector.

The selection of a president then did not push through, reportedly because of the lack of a set of criteria approved by the Board of Regents. This prompted the three candidates to file a complaint against the board. The case is still pending before the Court of Appeals.

"We are against any new search committee because this will only hamper the democratic process in the selection of a new legitimate PUP president," said student regent Diana Mond Directo. "Besides, redoing the process would take a while. It's just a waste of time and money, why don't they just choose among the three candidates?"

The Justice for PUP Movement is hoping that the installation of a new university president would resolve the school's various issues—including alleged rape cases inside the campus, graft and corruption, and favoritism in the promotion of rank-and-file employees and faculty members—which, it claimed, had been neglected by the past administration.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Major's gun used in Santiago slay

By Margaux C. Ortiz and Tarra V. Quismundo

THE GUN used by the primary suspect in shooting to death television director Louis Santiago outside an upscale bar in Makati City last month apparently belongs to a Marine major, according to officials of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and the Philippine National Police. Six others were wounded in the incident.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said they would issue a subpoena to Marine Major Robert Velasco and ask him to explain how his gun landed in the hands of suspect Oliver Jameiro's female companion, Charito Angeles.

Wycoco said they would also subpoena Angeles to the NBI to find out her involvement in the case. According to Jameiro's affidavit, Angeles handed him the gun which he used during a fight at the Venezia (V-Bar) parking lot.

Jameiro, a 32-year-old businessman engaged in the buying and selling of cars, was apprehended by NBI agents in Marikina City last Sunday.

"We have coordinated with Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief Gen. Efren Abu regarding Velasco's appearance," Wycoco said in a press conference at the NBI yesterday.

Makati chief of police Senior Supt. Jovito Gutierrez said they verified that Velasco was the registered owner of the Glock .357 firearm used in the V-Bar shooting incident last June 8.

Jameiro recounted in his confessional statement that he was in the bar with Angeles, Rogelio Rodriguez and Gino Castro when he saw a friend and another woman fighting outside around 4 a.m.

Jameiro's attempt to pacify the women, however, led to a brawl. The suspect said he remembered crawling toward a nearby parked vehicle to escape the angry crowd. Angeles then handed him a gun, he added.

"Feeling totally helpless and with only survival on my mind, I got hold of the gun and, without any malice, instinctively squeezed the trigger," Jameiro said in his statement.

He added: "I had no intention of shooting or hurting anybody because my action was propelled by my instinct to survive."

SPO2 Merquiodi Bodanio, who was shot in the forearm, however, said he saw Jameiro pointing the gun at him and his partner.

"I got into our patrol car when I saw Jameiro point the gun at me," said Bodanio, who had gone to the area immediately following a report on the incident.

Jameiro added in his statement that he boarded Angeles' Toyota Hi-Lux to get away from the scene after the shooting.

Singapore-bound

An NBI source said Jameiro and Angeles sped to the latter's home at the posh Hillsborough subdivision in Alabang where they left behind the Toyota Hi-Lux. The couple then went to Jameiro's home in Marikina City to get some clothes before heading to the airport, where they took a plane for Singapore on the same day.

The source added that Angeles left for the United States after a few days in Singapore. Jameiro, on the other hand, returned to the Philippines after a week.

Jameiro apparently sent surrender feelers after allegedly receiving death threats.

The NBI has filed charges of homicide and direct assault upon an agent or person in authority with attempted homicide against Jameiro before the Department of Justice (DOJ), according to the NBI National Capital Region chief, lawyer Edmund Arugay.

National Capital Region Police Office Director Vidal Querol said they would be filing obstruction of justice charges against Angeles' mother Estrella for refusing to cooperate with the police when asked about her daughter's whereabouts.

Meanwhile, Henry Salazar, the Makati City second assistant prosecutor handling the criminal complaint against Jameiro, said yesterday that he could not act on the pending case until there is prior action from other agencies.

Two cases

"What was filed before this office was a case about the shooting before the alleged shooter surrendered," said Salazar.

On June 24, the Makati Police Department's Criminal Investigation Division filed before the City Prosecutor's Office charges of homicide, attempted homicide, and direct assault upon a person of authority against the alleged assailant in the incident.

The charges were filed against a suspect identified as either Oliver Perez, Oliver Angeles or Oliver Castro, as police then had yet to pin down the identity of the alleged shooter. After Jameiro's surrender, a separate criminal case was filed against him before the DOJ.

JAMEIRO REM ZAMORA

Foul odor leads to closure of Muntinlupa City plant

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A LONG-ESTABLISHED industrial plant in Muntinlupa City was ordered to close indefinitely by the local government over the weekend, following repeated complaints from residents about foul odor coming from the plant and other pollution concerns.

The Makati Foundry Inc. (MFI) in Tunasan, Muntinlupa City, had been engaged in the recycling of scrap iron since 1977.

The plant's gates were padlocked on Friday by Business Permit and Licensing Office personnel, upon orders of Mayor Jaime Fresnedi.

Late last month, Tez Navarro, representing JPA Subdivision residents, sent a written complaint to the mayor, saying that the company had resumed its operations despite the revocation of its business permit last year.

"Our street, St. Francis Street, gets easily flooded during heavy rains because of waste water coming from the plant," Navarro said, adding that the situation worsens during the rainy season.

Residents of Sto. Niño Village and the Divine Mercy School faculty and staff had also filed various complaints at the City Hall against MFI. The offensive odor allegedly emitted by the plant smelled like gunpowder and sulfur, resulting in respiratory ailments among residents and students, the complainants added.

Following an investigation by the Committee on Health and Sanitation and the City Health Office, the city council recommended the immediate cancellation of the plant's business permit for violating pollution and sanitation laws and the Muntinlupa City Revenue Code.

However, MFI engineer Mario Garcia told the Inquirer that the MFI plant had not been operating since its request for renewal of permit had been denied.

He added that after the permit was canceled, operations had been restricted to the "finishing" stage where no iron melting was involved.

The plant had even passed tests conducted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Garcia said.

Mum's the word from Dys

By DJ Yap

QUEZON City police are facing a blank wall in the investigation of a car bombing incident along Edsa that hurt the widow and children of slain businessman Peter Dy last Sunday.

The family has refused to talk about the case, said Central Police District investigator-on-case PO3 Florencio Escobido.

Dy's widow, Adelfa Aguirre, her stepson, Patrick Dy, and daughter, Pamela Dy, suffered burns and cuts after their Nissan Patrol blew up on the southbound lane of Edsa in front of SM City Annex.

The three declined to submit a formal affidavit, though they allowed investigators to interview them, Escobido said. They only told police that they had no idea who could have placed the bomb in the rear of their vehicle, he added.

"What can we do? We can't force them to cooperate," said PO2 Joseph Madrid, who is also investigating the case.

The same problem faced the Valenzuela police investigating the death of Peter Dy in April 2004. Police said the businessman was killed by the same type of bomb that hurt the three other members of his family.

The front part of Dy's Mitsubishi Pajero exploded, killing him and hurting his driver and a bystander. The family also refused to cooperate with police investigating the incident, said Chief Insp. Deogracias Valera in an earlier interview.

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BILLIARDS: 2005 World Pool Championship; 12 noon and 2 p.m. (r); 4:30 p.m. and 8 p.m.; ESPN – Catch the replay of Day Four then witness Day Five take place live from Taiwan.

CYCLING: Tour de France, Stage 4; 4 p.m.; ESPN – Lance Armstrong continues his bid for his seventh yellow jersey.

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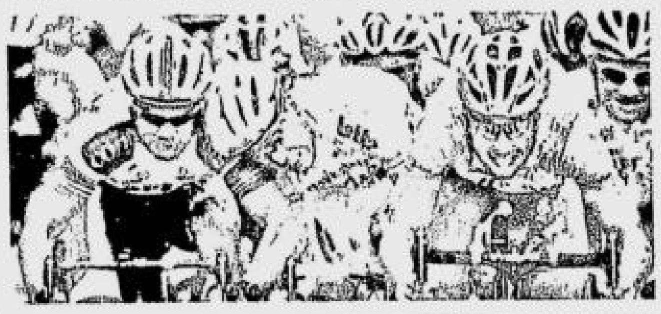

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Olympic body castigates BAP over caging turmoil

By Musong R. Castillo

A DAY after the international basketball federation (Fiba) froze the country out of international competitions, the Philippine Olympic Committee fired yet another salvo at the Basketball Association of the Philippines: This is all your fault.

POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco yesterday bluntly rejected the cage body's plea for reconsideration and then berated its leaders for "not taking care of matters when it still had time to."

Cojuangco's response to the BAP's appeal was swift and hard, and he minced no words. He reiterated that the "unsavory predicament of Philippine basketball can only be attributed to the grave misconduct of the BAP."

The BAP, through deputy secretary general Lito Alvarez, wrote Cojuangco on Monday asking that its team be allowed to defend its Southeast Asian Basketball Association crown. Cojuangco rejected the request.

"The POC denial of BAP request for a temporary permit to allow [the] BAP-organized team to represent the country in the Seaba in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where the Philippines is the ... holder of the Seaba crown for the past three years, is indeed a very sad day for the country and its athletes," Alvarez said in a statement.

The BAP expulsion on Thursday prompted Seaba organizers and the Fiba to bar the participation of any Philippine team in the tournament, which fired off yesterday.

The Fiba, in a letter to the POC on Monday, also effectively prevents the Philippines from seeing action in the Fiba-Asia (formerly ABC) championships in Doha, Qatar, in September. The Seaba is the qualifying tournament for the Asian event.

"The denial of our request by POC cost our Seaba crown and our chance to participate in the Fiba-Asia basketball championship in Doha, Qatar," Alvarez said.

The country has been preparing for the Doha tournament with the POC appointing Chot Reyes as coach of a national program geared toward returning the Philippines back into the Olympic competition.

PUTTING THEIR FOOT DOWN: Cojuangco (right) and POC chair Robert Aventajado at yesterday's PSA Forum

With the current situation, the Philippine Basketball Association, chief backer of the San Miguel Corp.-funded program, may pull the plug on the preparation. (*See related story*).

The Philippines also stands to lose its chance of defending the basketball title in the Southeast Asian Games which the country is hosting on Nov. 27 to Dec. 5.

But Cojuangco pointed out that the BAP, rather than "address the causes for its suspension and eventual expulsion from the POC, flaunted its relationship with Fiba-Asia."

"There's a happy relationship between Fiba-Asia and the BAP," Cojuangco grudgingly acknowledged.

Cojuangco, who was yesterday's guest at the PSA Forum along with POC chair Robert Aventajado and former world boxing champion Manny Pacquiao, said they have requested the Fiba to expedite its investigation of the issues that led to the BAP expulsion.

"*Kung ang nagiging usapan ay usapang lalaki, madali sanang naresolba and problema* (Had this been a covenant among men, the problem would have been easily solved)," said Cojuangco.

PBA could pull out of nat'l team

By June Navarro

WITH no international tournament to prepare for, the Philippine Basketball Association could temporarily pull out its resources from the men's national basketball team.

"It's an option," said PBA commissioner Noli Eala yesterday, a day after the international basketball federation (Fiba) suspended the Philippines from international competitions.

"But we are still studying the possibilities. What's definite is the PBA has been very unhappy with the way things have turned out."

San Miguel Corp., the team's chief supporter, has spent millions to prepare a competitive national squad composed of PBA players for the Fiba-Asia Championships slated in Doha, Qatar, this September.

The Fiba-Asia Championships is the qualifying for the world championships next year in Saitama, Japan. The 2007 edition is the qualifier for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

With the Fiba suspension, the country has been barred from playing in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association championships where the top two countries advance to the Fiba-Asia Championships.

National coach Chot Reyes, however, is hoping the current situation will be ironed out, with an eye toward the program's true target: The Beijing Olympics.

"We would like to remind everyone that this team and the program was built for the 2007 Fiba-Asia which is the qualifier for the 2008 Olympics," said Reyes.

"Hopefully (by the 2007 Asian championship)," Reyes added, "our basketball leaders would have found a way to get as back into the Fiba. I just hope they let us continue implementing the program for 2007."

Manalo first Pinoy in round of 64

KAOHSIUNG, Taiwan—Marlon Manalo won for the fifth straight time Monday night and became the first Filipino to clinch a berth in the knockout phase of the 2005 World Pool Championship at the Kaohsiung Business Exhibition Center here.

The 29-year-old Manalo trounced D. Singh Lilly of India, 5-0, in an otherwise luckluster Group 15 action.

Manalo, the only Filipino to reach the quarterfinals of last year's event, still has two more matches in the group stage.

The round of 64 begins today. The top four players from each group will advance to the next phase. The field has been split into 16 groups with eight players each.

Meanwhile, defending champion Alex Pagulayan, Gandy Valle, Dennis Orcollo and Rodolfo Luat each need one more win in their last two matches to join Manalo in the final 64 of the $350,000 event.

Pagulayan sits atop Group 1 with 8 points, but needs one more win to advance outright.

"BATA" Reyes nurses a mathematical chance of advancing to the next round.

The 27-year-old Filipino-Canadian whipped Charles Bryant of the United States, 5-0, then beat Yulan Govender of South Africa, 5-2.

Valle, the Singapore leg winner of this year's San Miguel Asian 9-Ball Tour, also swept his two matches Monday night to improve to 4-1 in Group 10. The Davao native scored identical 5-3 wins over John Schmidt of the US and Andreas Roschkowsky of Germany.

Not to be outdone, Orcollo posted twin 5-2 victories over Ben Davies of Wales and Radoslaw Babica of Poland to up his mark to 4-1 in Group 5.

Luat stood at 4-1 in Group 2.

Two other Filipinos, Warren Kiamco and Ronato Alcano, remained in the thick of the battle. Kiamco totes a 3-2 card to stay tied for third in Group 3 while Alcano is battling for the fourth spot with a 2-3 record in Group 12.

Not as fortunate were Efren "Bata" Reyes, Francisco "Django" Bustamante and Antonio "Nikoy" Lining. The trio are in danger of early exits after suffering a setback each.

Reyes took a 2-5 loss to Roman Hybler of the Czech Republic in Group 4. The 1999 champion must now win over Malta's Tony Drago and American Mike Davis, then hope that the latter bows to Kang Chin-ching of Taiwan. Moreover, Reyes must also earn more racks than Davis to have a chance of moving forward.

Bustamante was blanked by Thomas Engbert, 0-5, and stood at 2-3 in Group 7.

Pagunsan shares Japan Am lead

PAGUNSAN a cinch to make the match plays.

JUVIC Pagusan stringed three birdies from the 13th hole en route to a four-under-par 68 Monday and a share of the lead with two others after the first round of the Japan Amateur Championship at the Daisen Golf Club in Tottori, Japan, yesterday.

The 26-year-old amateur hotshot gunned down two more birdies going out to cushion a lone missed-green bogey on nines of 34-34.

Pagunsan, who is being caddied by buddy and former national amateur champion Artemio Murakami, looked a cinch to make the top 32 who will figure in head-to-head knockout duels starting Wednesday.

The rain-drenched tournament drew 155 players from across Asia.

Pagunsan played impressively in the tight, up-and-down Daisen course despite completing only 11 holes during the practice round in the driving rain on Sunday.

The Filipino's stint is backed by port services company ICTSI and under the auspices of the National Golf Association of the Philippines.

He gained a spot in the tournament for being a member of the surprising Asian team which beat Europe for the Bonallack Trophy in Italy last year, according to retired admiral Luisito Fernandez, the NGAP secretary general.

Meanwhile, ace shotmaker Jayvie Agojo and jungolfer Paulina Sotto open their bids in the Pharmaton Malaysian Ladies Amateur Golf Championship today in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

Agojo and Sotto are entered in the individual and team competitions of the 54-hole tournament at the tough Sutera Harbour Golf and Country Club layout.

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Compromise and sacrifice

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

FIRST hour yesterday morning, I got this passionate, lengthy text message from Talk 'N Text PBA governor Ricky Vargas who initially couldn't believe that the Philippines was suspended indefinitely from participating in any Fiba-sanctioned tournament, and had to ask me for confirmation. I told him what he read in the papers were all true.

"Very disappointing," Ricky said. "By ousting BAP, the POC has cut its nose to spite its face. The BAP, by contesting POC sanction in the Fiba, and the POC writing Fiba on behalf of PBFI to seek recognition, has caused Fiba to suspend RP."

Having hardly slept a wink the previous night (because of TNT's two straight losses in the finals?), Ricky said he woke up to a dark, gloomy morning-after to be further depressed by the headlines in the sports pages.

"Beth, could you please tell all parties concerned, for just once to think of Philippine basketball instead of themselves. Why not give the BAP another chance and put them on probation? Is this too much to ask of the POC? Can the PBFI organizers delay gratification of their desire to lead Philippine basketball? Sacrifice *muna*. Let us see who speaks the truth, for the one that is more willing to compromise and sacrifice and humble self, is the one that truly loves basketball.

"Maybe it's time *na mag*-People Power *na lahat ng* basketball fans. This is no different from partisan politics in government. Can't we even solve our own problems? *Basang-basa ko ang* politics involved. *Nakakagalit, nakakahinayang*."

* * *

Speaking of the PBFI—if it will continue to exist, from hereon, the UAAP will be represented in the organization by league president Father Maximino Rendon, who is also president of this year's host Adamson University. The decision was reached by the UAAP board in a recent meeting.

Fr. Rendon will replace Ateneo's Jun Jun Capistrano who will probably be retained in the board as an incorporator.

Incidentally, a number of stakeholders are questioning the appointment of Moying Martelino as interim secretary general by the POC, without consultation among the stakeholders.

As interim sec-gen, one of Moying's major tasks is to personally handpick eight regional directors nationwide who will join the board in time for the elections. No wonder the stakeholders are questioning Moying's appointment.

* * *

Fiba-Asia sec-gen Dato Yeoh Choo Hock gave the POC up to 10 a.m. Tuesday to resolve its conflict with the BAP, in which case the RP team would be allowed to play in the SEABA which started yesterday.

Dato Yeoh got no response.

Now the die is cast. We're not only banned from the SEABA, but the September Fiba-Asia Men's Championship in Doha, Qatar, as well, since the SEABA is the qualifying tourney for the latter. The World Championship in Qatar is also out, because the Fiba-Asia championship is the qualifying tournament for this 2006 event.

What a waste! I hope everybody's happy.

* * *

Contrary to what I had expected, Volleyball Grand Prix organizer Ricky Palou didn't look that drawn and haggard (from afar, that is), considering the enormous problems that have fallen on his shoulders, when I saw him at the UAAP press conference last Monday noon.

The group that was supposed to market the Grand Prix had backed out at the last minute, leaving Ricky holding the bag, so to speak. How and where to get the money to pay for the humongous expenses incurred in the staging of the event was Ricky's biggest problem.

* * *

Apart from being a successful businessman, would you believe Harbour Centre owner Mikee Romero is also a doctor? This I found out only recently, when I had the chance to chat with him during the dinner party he hosted at the Kamayan for the La Salle legends who won against Ateneo.

A DLSU varsity player, Mikee admitted that like every Filipino cager, his dream was to one day play in the PBA. However, his aspirations were derailed after an injury and a serious bout with hepatitis forced him to give up his dream.

"In sheer frustration," Mikee said. "After this I got married, and concentrated on my studies with a passion."

Mikee got his college diploma, MBA and Ph.D from La Salle where he later taught. He also enrolled in the Wharton School of Business in Pennsylvania. In 2002, he assumed management of the family-owned Harbour Centre which was then financially strapped.

Mikee rehabilitated the business, turning it into a multimillion-peso operation after only less than three years. Now he's back to his first love, which is basketball. He can still achieve his dream, no longer by playing in the PBA but maybe owning a PBA team, since he has the money to buy a franchise.

"For frustrated cagers like me, I hope my story serves as an inspiration," Mikee said. "There is life after basketball."

Dolphins, Cards shoot for share of lead

STANDINGS	W	L
Letran	3	0
St. Benilde	3	0
PCU	2	0
Mapua	2	0
Perpetual	0	2
JRU	0	2
SSC	0	3
San Beda	0	3

GAMES TODAY
(*Cuneta Astrodome*)
11:30a.m.—PCU vs Perpetual (Jrs)
2 p.m.—PCU vs Perpetual (Srs)
4 p.m.—Mapua vs San Beda (Srs)

PHILIPPINE Christian University coach Junel Baculi has yet to see the team he envisions.

Barely four months with the Dolphins, he expects improvement when the defending champions battle the University of Perpetual Help Altas in the 81st NCAA season at 2 p.m. today at the Cuneta Astrodome.

"Every team we beat is a step," said Baculi, who will try to steer the Dolphins to a share of top spot with the Letran Knights and the St. Benilde Blazers at 3-0. "We're still fine-tuning the team."

Similarly, coach Horacio Lim said the Mapua Cardinals should heed his reminders to extend their winning streak to three and forge a four-way tie for the lead.

"There should be no complacency," noted Lim, whose Cardinals will clash with the San Beda Lions at 4 p.m. "We have to take away the bad habits. Like in the first half we play right, but then we relax."

Last Friday, the Dolphins posted a 72-70 squeaker over the San Sebastian Stags, with Gabby Espinas, the 2004 Most Valuable Player and Rookie of the Year, scoring the game-winning shot.

Although Baculi credited Espinas for bailing them out, he criticized the Dolphins for squandering a 22-point lead.

"I'm very disappointed with our win," said Baculi. "We have to learn from this."

But the Altas, the team the Dolphins swept in the finals last year, have more concerns to deal with.

Winless in two games, the Altas are clearly struggling from the departure of league top scorer Noy Javier.

Mapua, meanwhile, found a new go-to-guy in rookie Kelvin dela Peña, who averaged a team-high 16 points in his first two outings.

Lim commended the Fil-Canadian guard, yet he stressed everyone should work on their defense.

"We have to play tougher defense," said Lim, noting that beating San Beda is a difficult task. "We have to play all out against San Beda."

The Lions are coming off their third straight setback, but recently got good numbers from highly touted rookie Rogemar Menor.

Menor, the 2004 juniors MVP, came away with 13 points and grabbed seven rebounds in San Beda's 65-55 loss to St. Benilde last Monday. *Jasmine W. Payo*

San Miguel hopes to go 3-0 vs TNT

TWO GAMES up in a race-to-four series and still, San Miguel Beer feels it is the underdogs in the Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference Finals.

"I'm not kidding," San Miguel Beer coach Jong Uichico swore after turning back the Phone Pals to grab a commanding 2-0 lead in the best-of-seven series. "We still consider ourselves underdogs.

"If Asi (Taulava) wasn't there, and I'm telling you guys that we are the underdogs, then I'm already making a fool of you," added Uichico, who is two games away from clinching his sixth coaching title with the Beermen.

San Miguel Beer hopes to clinch one of those two wins when it faces Talk 'N Text anew in Game 3 tonight at the Araneta Coliseum.

And it will go into the match armed to the teeth.

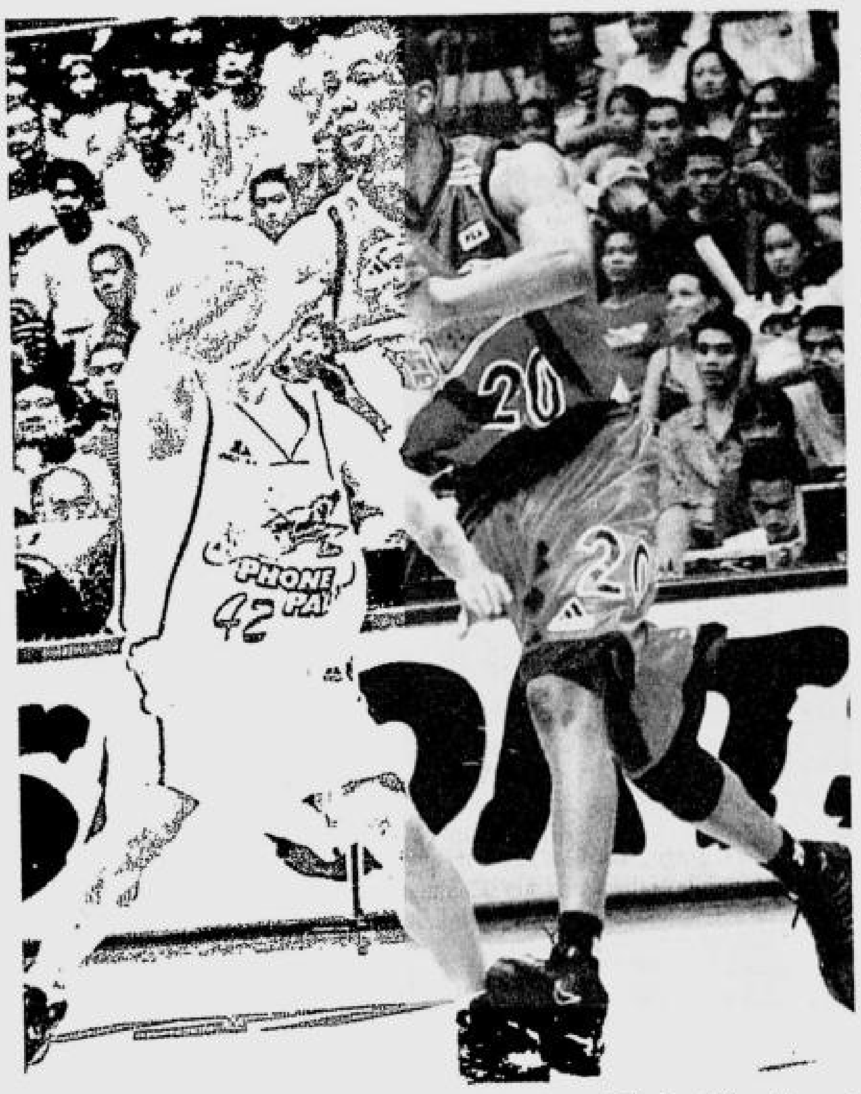
So far, in San Miguel Beer's twin victories, Danny Ildefonso, Dorian Peña, Olsen Racela, Dondon Hontiveros and Ace Custis have played key roles to neutralize the Phone Pals' menacing advantage in the shaded area.

But it was Ildefonso who really came out big, backstopping Custis on the scoring end in Game 1 and beating Taulava on a baseline drive for the game-winner in Game 2, where the Beermen came back from a 20-point deficit.

"It never crossed my mind that there was no hope when we're down by 20, because that kind of thinking will only rub off on the game plan and the players," said Uichico.

Pundits believe the return of the 6-foot-9 Taulava from nine months of suspension somehow affected the once fluid offense of the Phone Pals, who got a pair of struggling games from Willie Miller and Jimmy Alapag.

Miller and Alapag combined for a total of 34 points the past two games, a great departure from their usual double-figure average. Jerald Honeycutt was turnover-prone the entire series.



PRESSURED by Talk 'N Text playmaker Felix Belano (left), San Miguel import Ace Custis decides to pass the ball to a teammate. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Victor Pablo had been the lone bright spot for the Phone Pals, but the 85 percent free-throw shooter missed both charities with 1.9 ticks remaining that led to their defeat in Game 2.

"We must find a quick solution to break those string of setbacks," said Talk 'N Text coach Joel Banal. "Hopefully, we can start to turn things around."

Banal knows that should the Phone Pals fall into a deep 0-3 pit, they will be forced to overhaul a championship series deficit no team has ever conquered in league history.

After winning Game 2, the Beermen already have an 86-percent probability of capturing their 17th crown since 18 out of the last 21 teams which took a 2-0 lead in a best-of-seven Finals went on to win the championship. *June Navarro*

Asuncion tops rival, barges into semifinals

KENNIE Asuncion proved too tough to handle for Jertie Kagalingan as she rammed in winners after winners on the way to an 11-8, 11-0 victory yesterday and the semifinal round of the elite masters division of the 2005 JVC Open Badminton Championships at the Glorietta Activity Center in Makati City.

Chasing a fifth straight title in the ladies singles of what has become the unofficial national championships sponsored by JVC (Phils.) Inc., Asuncion faces the winner between Ronnielie Kagalingan and Vanessa Tangco whose quarterfinal clash was still being played at presstime.

The semifinals will be held Friday.

Action shifts into high gear today with the staging of the semifinal round of the elite class and the quarterfinals of the elite masters.

In other results, Elaine Lao and partner Marife Durana ripped Jackie Gonzales and Beth Calusin, 15-4, 15-0, to arrange a title duel with the pair of Judy Lim and Thea Cordero in the veterans-novice division.

Lim and Cordero thumped Lorna Silva and Arlene Carlos, 15-0, 15-7.

In doubles, Gary Tulio and Dan Astillero thwarted Vincent Lim and Anthony Cheng, 15-11, 15-8, to advance to the finals against Bubu Santos and Alvin Ballesteros, who scored a walkover win over Lloyd Palma and Francis Camarista.

Tulio and Durana later turned back Florentino Cruz and Alejandra Enriquez, 15-8, 12-15, 15-13, to reach the mixed doubles finals.

They will meet Jofer Velez and Emy Jorge, who outlasted Vincent Lim and Judy Lim, in the closest match thus far, 13-15, 17-15, 17-16.

Gopez backed expulsion

AN INQUIRER Sports report on the POC general assembly proceedings last June 30 misstated that National Golf Association of the Philippines president Benny Gopez opposed the expulsion of the Basketball Association of the Philippines as a member of the POC.

Gopez, according to the minutes of the assembly, actually opposed a second motion, which was to extend the period of suspension of the BAP. We apologize for the error.

Slow American effigy outshines Bata Reyes

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

CAN'T blame local billiards buffs for feeling blue. There was bad weather early for RP out there in Kaoshiung, Taiwan.

Efren "Bata" Reyes, the most charming sports star we have lent the world, squandered his magic and figured in his worst start yet in the World Pool Championship.

Bata, no longer wearing the sweet smile that has become trademark in the tournament, was on the brink of a shameful exit after the initial phase in Kaoshiung.

Fortunately, it's no longer a case of the RP boat going where Bata Reyes was headed.

It's not crying time for the entire Philippine team out there in Taipei.

At least a couple of younger RP stars, Marlon Manalo and Gandy Valle, were shining in their own way.

They were threatening to crowd the other foreign title contenders as of Monday.

* * *

Of course, other than the fortunes of RP cue masters, there are colorful games worth following early in this year's championship.

That's if you did not also fall victim to an American pool imperialist who gave slow play a dreadful twist in this year's World Pool series.

For starters, heavyweight Dan Basavich of the US team did not look fit and ready for pool action in Kaoshiung.

He must've lost his way to a sumo tournament in Japan and strayed off to the tournament site.

He's huge and hulking, large and lardy.

Basavich, terribly overweight, perspires like a walking sweatshop.

Nothing wrong because he takes extra care not to smear the Brunswick table, thanks to a towel the size of a blanket which he keeps in handy.

Problem was that he had ruined the otherwise flawless World Pool system.

Basavich spends the time needed to take a shower before taking his next shot.

In pool play, that could be equal to a lifetime, but Basavich did not look a bit bothered by his misdemeanor.

* * *

Well, after having hosted Basavich, it's very likely organizers of the World Pool series would alter rules and remedy the dreaded slow play.

Basavich was not a bad shot, but he visibly prevailed over the rated Hsia Hua-kai only after the clean-cut Taiwanese bet had lost his cool and composure waiting in vain for the American behemoth to shoot.

The dreaded American is a master at fussing around—scratching his behind, wriggling, realigning his stiff neck, measuring the table with his cue stick, re-chalking, aiming, then getting back to his seat again to collect his towel—and he has more annoying moves up his sweaty sleeves.

You want an idea of how festering Basavich was at taking his very slow shot?

Think of an opposite to Tony Drago, maybe the fastest shooter in the history of world pool.

If Drago of Malta is the tornado that turns things upside down, Basavich is the laziest summer breeze that lulls everybody to slumber.

* * *

Drago is the Indy 500, Basavich a hobbling hearse.

Too bad but the World Pool Championship was clearly the victim here.

How sure are they there would be no Basavich showing up at the championship site next year?

Well, if Basavich is to serve his purpose, they must introduce a new anti-sleep system in the championship.

You know, like what they had done in world basketball after the great coach Herr Silva of the Philippine team ordered the ball passed around indefinitely until the final buzzer once they had grabbed the lead from a Taiwanese team.

They next had to introduce the shot clock following that ingenious maneuver by the greatest Filipino cage tactician ever.

Yes, correcting the format flaw is the only way they could justify having allowed Basavich, overweight effigy of America's sweaty sorrow, to gatecrash the 2005 Kaoshiung classic.

Pasay derby stakes P2 million

A WHOPPING cash pot of P2 million await the winners in Pasay City Cockpit's 19th PCC Anniversary 5-Cock Derby slated July 18, 20 and 22 with Sagupaan Complexor 3000 as sponsor. Pit manager Eric dela Rosa said that participants will receive traditional anniversary gifts. "We are also adopting a new format where prizes can easily be won," said Dela Rosa. Two pointers in the elimination rounds on July 18 and 20 will get P15,000 each. Those who will emerge as champions on July 22 will receive P1 million. Participants with three straight wins (fight numbers 1, 2 and 3; fight numbers 2, 3 and 4; and fight numbers 3, 4 and 5 will each get P100,000. For reservation of cockhouses, call 843-1890, 843-1746 and 816-6750.

SPORTSWATCH

Roligon Hatawan round 2 today

THE SECOND batch of 107 entries from different provinces collide starting at 3 p.m. today in the second round of the Hatawan Sa Tag-ulan 6-Cock Derby at Roligon Mega Cockpit. Twenty-seven entries emerged with two wins each in Monday's opening round which featured 115 entries and drew a crowd of more than 6,000. The cockpit management said all center bets will again be squared by popular *llamadores* Gerald Vandolf Go of Sta. Ana, Renato Shio and Abu Centeno. For inquiries, call 851-2275, 833-1638 or 852-9812.

RACING TIPS

AT SLLP BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Pasirit 2. Sweet Serenade 3. Better Beth 4. Lucky Fil
Race 2—1. Red Strike 2. Dixie Dash 3. Million Dollar 4. City Star 5. Amaretta
Race 3—1. Ocean Cookie/Risk Taker 2. Hello Junior 3. Sweet Alyssa 4. Formidable Ella
Race 4—1. Nothing Impossible 2. Mr. Lucas 3. Lord Brian 4. Raven
Race 5—1. Highly Connected 2. Princess Sophia 3. Lady Tycoon 4. Holy Smoke
Race 6—1. Loaded 2. Best Hand 3. She Boom 4. Remarkable
Race 7—1. Noor 2. Do It David 3. Medal's Time 4. Le Mirage
Race 8—1. Sovereign Dancer 2. El Montruo 3. Flying Strike 4. Arbiter 5. Zero Gravity 6. Fly Aday Fly

Forest Hills rips Eastridge, seizes Fed League lead

FOREST Hills swept its rescheduled match against Eastridge then turned back Canlubang to seize the lead in the Blue group as action resumed in the 2005 Johnnie Walker Federation Golf League matches in various venues over the weekend.

The 2001 champion got a bonus point when the tandems of Levy Marcelino-Bobby Ysip, Ronnie Littaua-Bobby Chico, Gary Uy-Ferdie Atendido and Raffy Garcia-Eding Hizon beat their opponents from Eastridge.

Forest Hills then posted their second straight win at the expense of Canlubang through the efforts of Chico-Garcia and Uy-Ysip, who won their matches, and Larry Patnongon-Stewart Go, who secured a draw against Canlubang.

Forest now has 8 points on three wins and a draw, two points ahead of Orchard, which also clinched an extra point after trampling a skidding Eastridge side, 3.5-.5.

Jungolfer Wolen Superal teamed up with Ronnie Olaguera to win the scramble point, Timmy Owyong-Andy Vasquez took the aggregate match and Raymond Co-Paul Salvador clinched the high-low point. Louie Garcia and Kazuo Miyashita settled for a draw in the foursomes as the Orchard golfers won a bonus point for the second time.

Wack Wack likewise wrested back the solo lead with a big 3-1 win over Manila Golf in the Green division of the event also supported by the Philippine Amusements and Gaming Corp. and organized by the Federation of Golf Clubs in the Philippines Inc.

Also in the Green group, Riviera and Valley battled to a 2-2 draw with Pat Co-Jonathan Aguirre (high-low) and Chito Laureta-Adrian Mauricio (aggregate) winning for Valley and Eric Gozo-Chito Ilumin (scramble) and Pepot Inigo-Ben Liclican (foursomes) saving the match for Riviera.

Standings (*Win-Draw-Loss-Points*)

JW Blue: Forest 3-1-0-8, Orchard 2-1-1-6, Canlubang 1-1-2-4, Eastridge 1-1-2-3, Mimosa 0-2-2-2

JW Gold: Southwoods 2-2-0-7, Northwoods 2-2-0-7, Alabang 1-1-2-5, Sherwood Hills 1-1-2-3, Highlands 0-1-3-1

JW Green: Wack Wack 3-0-1-6, Manila Golf 1-2-1-4, Valley 1-2-1-4, Sta. Elena 1-1-2-3, Riviera 1-1-2-3

Armstrong plays it safe

Belgian wins 3rd stage; Aussie sprinter disqualified

TOURS, France—Tom Boonen won Monday's third stage at the Tour de France, while six-time champion Lance Armstrong once more contented himself with sitting safely behind in the main pack to finish 87th.

Belgian rider Boonen clinched the 212.5-kilometer (133-mile) trek from La Chataigneraie to Tours in a thrilling sprint to the line, clocking 4 hours, 36 minutes, 9 seconds.

"For me, it is really good to have the green jersey," Boonen said. "Tomorrow will be a tough day. I hope to be able to keep hold of it until Paris."

Armstrong does not like long, flat stages that favor sprinters like Boonen.

Two years ago, the Texan was caught in a 35-rider crash on the Tour and was lucky he didn't suffer much worse than cuts and bruises.

"Days like today aren't necessarily my idea of a great time," Armstrong said. "Everybody does something a little bit crazy in front of you on the finish."

Caught behind a group of eight riders heading into the last 100 m , Boonen cut through a gap and burst to the line. Peter Wrolich of Austria was second and Australian Stuart O'Grady was third.

His countryman Robbie McEwen had crossed the line in third place, but organizers judged McEwen had intentionally impeded O'Grady's path to the line after reviewing the incident.

Boonen won Sunday's second stage in a similarly daring fashion. In last year's Tour, he won two sprint stages. Boonen keeps the green jersey as the best sprinter.

American David Zabriskie of Team CSC retained the overall race leader's yellow jersey, narrowly ahead of second-placed Armstrong.

QUICKSTEP team rider Tom Boonen, wearing the sprinter's green jersey, cuts loose from the lead pack as it approaches the finish line. To his left, Lotto-Davitamone's Stuart O'Grady (center) and Robbie McEwen of team Cofidis jostle for position. Officials later charged McEwen for a violation and stripped him of his third-place finish. REUTERS

Armstrong was not looking to win the stage ahead of Tuesday's key team time trial, where he will try to gain more time on his rivals.

"It's an important day," Armstrong said. "It's important to show that the team is the strongest. I think we're up against some strong teams."

During Monday's stage, the Texan rolled along in the middle of the pack and even found time to chat to Zabriskie, his former teammate at US Postal.

"Lance was telling me to just enjoy the yellow jersey," Zabriskie said. "He asked me if he could have a turn.

"It's nice to be in yellow on the Fourth of July," Zabriskie added. "We can celebrate with some fireworks when I get home, a barbecue, and drink the drinks everyone loves to drink."

Armstrong sits just two seconds behind Zabriskie and could claim the yellow jersey after the team time trial. Discovery Channel will start favorite having crushed other teams last year.

"Holding onto the lead is going to be really tough," Zabriskie said. "But we have a strong team and we'll give it our best."

Armstrong has no intention of doing any favors.

"We all know it's two seconds to take the yellow jersey," he said "Regardless of how many I've had in my day, it's still a jersey I cherish. I'll be pedaling hard tomorrow (Tuesday)."

Armstrong consolidated his overall advantage over main rivals Jan Ullrich, Alexandre Vinokourov and Ivan Basso—all of whom finished with Armstrong in the main group.

The Texan leads Vinokourov by 51 seconds, Ullrich by 66 and Basso by 84. *AP*

NBC CAGING

Taguig five gets back at Cebuanos

FORWARD Taguig avenged its finals loss to defending champion Tribu Sugbu last year by subduing the Cebuanos, 67-60, in overtime Monday in their first meeting in the 2005 Panasonic-NBC national basketball championship at the CP Tiñga Gym here.

Former FEU Tamaraw Rhagnee Sinco scored the first five points in the extra period to propel Mayor Freddie Tiñga's Taguig cagers to their sixth win in seven games.

Taguig started slow and trailed 40-46 going into the payoff period. But Ariel de Castro and Paul Reguera sparked a 15-6 run to give the hosts a 55-52 lead over the Skygo/Sirlitz-backed Cebuanos.

New recruit Neil Raneses and Alex Cainglet struck against Jimboy Robillos' lone charity to bring Tribu within two, 54-56, with 15 ticks left.

Then playmaker Ronald Bucao scored on a drive in the last four ticks to extend the match.

Tribu suffered its second loss in seven games and slid to third place in the Southern Conference of the tournament supported by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Cebu Pacific, Spring Cooking Oil, Accel, Molten, Nature's Spring, Far Eastern Insurance, Skygo Motorcycles, Sirlitz Solutions Provider, Hapee Toothpaste, Dewfoam Corp., KSK Food Products (Boy Bawang), Ping Ping Lechon, Bayview Park Hotel and Holiday Plaza-Cebu.

Cavite and unbeaten Mantawi were playing at presstime last night.

NBC games are shown on NBN 4 at 4 p.m. every Sunday and on Prime Channel at 2:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. daily.

The scores:

TAGUIG 67—De Castro 16, Dulay 10, Robillos 9, Sinco 9, Marucot 7, Ricafuente 7, Reguera 5, Vilar 4, Zablan 0.

TRIBU 60—Raneses 10, Cainglet 10, Bucao 9, Alamcin 8, Guerrero 8, Mangubat 6, Briones 4, Ursal 3, Mercado 2, Luga 0, Paglinawan 0.

Quarters: 10-21, 27-35, 40-46, 56-56, 67-60.

New strip makes drag racing safer

DRAG racing often fetches images of wrecked cars, twisted steel and smoking skid marks.

It's an image the Batangas Racing Circuit wants to wipe out with a permanent and legal 800-meter drag strip sanctioned by the governing Automobile Association of the Philippines.

The Drag Strip, the first of its kind in the country, is now fully operational and is complete with the amenities of a racing circuit. It has safety walls, a burn-out area, an elevated grandstand, hospitality suites, garage for the competition cars and a parking area.

The Inaugural Drag Race at the Batangas Racing Circuit kicks off July 22-23. It will be a daylight drag racing competition and the driver with the fastest time will own the bragging rights as owner of the Drag Strip record time.

The Batangas Racing Circuit, located 90 km south of Manila, has been the venue of karting, superbikes, touring cars and the prestigious Asian Formula 3 Series.

"We now have a track for drag races that's safe and convenient," said Batangas Racing Circuit manager Sherwin Mojica. "The safety features of this Drag Strip will surely minimize accidents for both the participants and spectators. And with the sanction of the AAP, which is an affiliate of the world governing FIA, we also hope to bring drag racing to a higher level."

Interested participants may contact the Batangas Racing Circuit at (632) 8172241 or fax 8151241 or BRC officials Rodini Rivera (0927-3219363 or rivera_rodini@yahoo.com), Sherwin Mojica (0915-4606653 or sherwinmojica@yahoo.com) or Nelson Gayola (0917-6920767 or nelson_gayola@kiltonmotor.com).

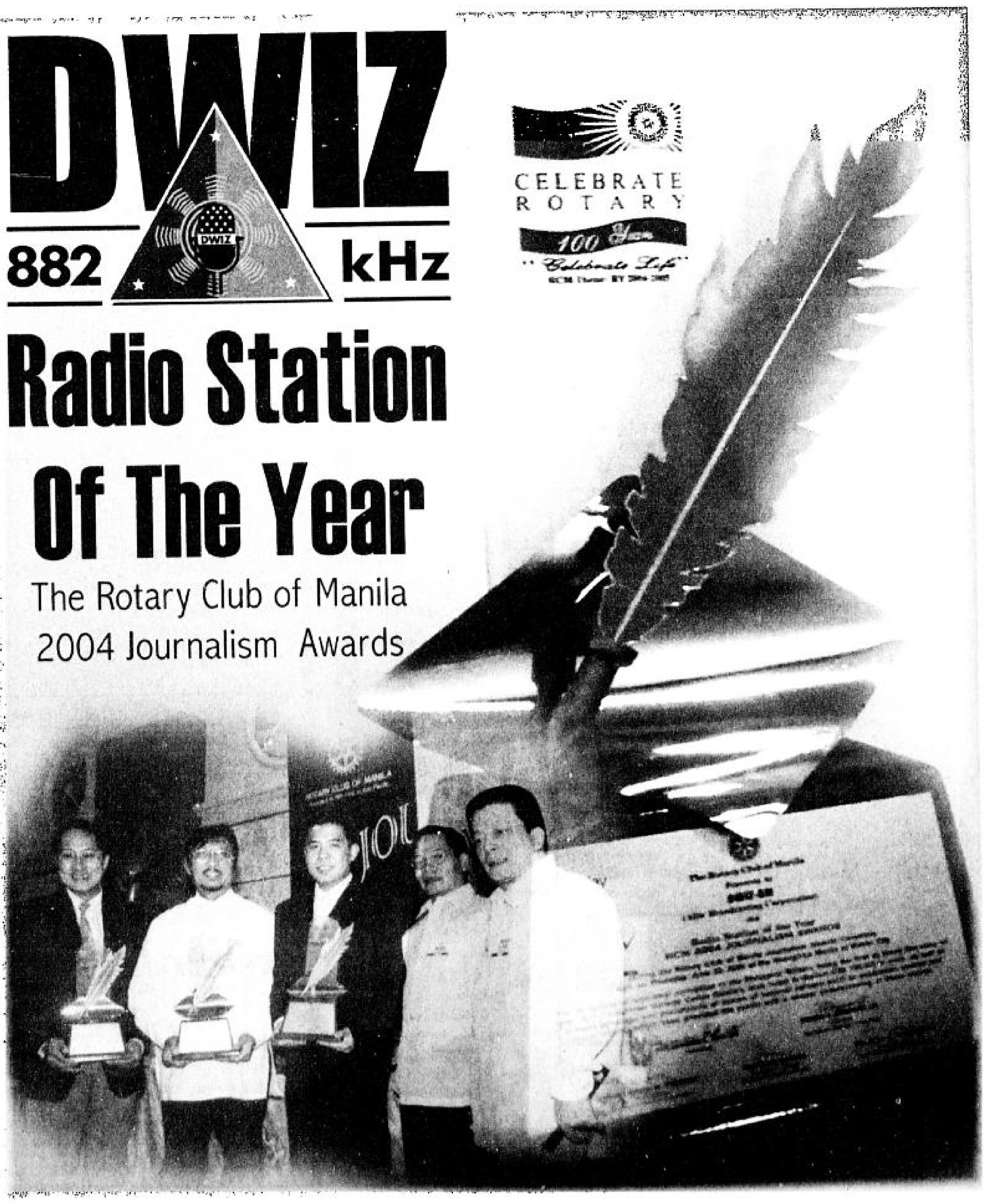
Acoustic, Galaxy rule adidas Streetball tilt

TEAM Acoustic and Team Galaxy fashioned out victories in convincing fashions to rule the seniors' and girls' divisions, respectively, in the adidas Streetball Challenge at the Ateneo de Zamboanga University covered courts over the weekend.

Team Acoustic of Barangay Talon-Talon upended Team Classic of Ateneo de Zamboanga-A, 15-10, and advanced to the regional finals of the event, sponsored by top sports apparel adidas, slated next week in Davao City.

Team Galaxy overwhelmed Team Gallor, 17-6, in a duel of Western Mindanao State U teams to gain a spot in the Mindanao finals of the four-month long, nationwide circuit co-presented by Globe Gentxt and backed by McDonald's, Cherifer Multivitamins, Snickers chocolate bar, Coppertone, adidas fragrance and body care, Blue Angel alcohol, Milo, Powerade, Viva Mineral Water, adidas eyewear and Yehey.com.

Meanwhile, the second adidas-Cherifer Big Man's Camp will be held July 9-10 at the Gaisano Ilustre gym in Davao City. The event is open to players at least 6 feet in height and 19 years old and below. For details, contact Vic Sai at 0921-5949303.



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CLOCKWISE from left, Mallilin and Nicolas during special back-to-back programs recently, Nicolas onstage, magic with Folies de Mwah!

A logical evolution

SHOW TIME

FROM sleek to suspenseful, from magical to magic. It is the logical evolution for entertainment at Club Mwah!, which has attracted various sectors in the past year with extravagant concepts and execution.

The club, set up and managed by partners Pocholo Mallilin and Kris Nicolas, was named Outstanding Entertainment Theater & Bar during the 12th Annual Asia-Pacific Excellence Awards last month.

Now Nicolas, as creative director, goes one step beyond Mwah!'s well-loved cabaret fare with a world-class magic presentation—"Spectaculo," featuring a duo of American and German illusionists.

Fridays and Saturdays starting July 15, "Spectaculo" will be presented as a dinner show that starts at 7:30 p.m. The illusionists interact with the club's homegrown group, Folies de Mwah!, in a presentation tailored for families and groups celebrating special events.

At 11 p.m., the long-running "Bedazzled"—an hour-long non-stop song-and-dance revue in the tradition of Las Vegas' Caesars Palace—goes onstage as usual for the club's habitues and other night owls.

Tuesdays to Thursdays, Folies de Mwah! takes over again, dishing out the witty vignettes, glamorous costume numbers and humorous musical impersonations that have earned raves for both the group and the club.

Call 5357943 or 6316009, or visit www.clubmwah.com. Club Mwah! is located at The Venue Tower, 652 Boni Avenue, between Edsa and Mandaluyong city hall.

Rico J, Apo in Las Piñas

After the successful concert of Spirit of '67, the journey down Memory Lane continues at the 2nd Level Activity Hub of Starmall Las Piñas (C.V. Star Ave. Philamlife Village, Pamplona, Las Piñas City). Rico J. Puno takes the stage on Friday, July 8, at 8 p.m., and the Apo Hiking society on Aug. 27.

Call 8725349 or 8724835.

Tonight

RJ at Discovery Suites' Serendipity Lounge. Call 635-2222.

RNB Wednesday featuring Stella Ruiz at RJ Guitar Bar along Jupiter St. Makati; 9 p.m.

Side A at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Twisted Pair at Suburbia

Tomorrow

Retrospect and Keystone at Suburbia

Elderly Brothers at RJ Guitar Bar along Jupiter St. Makati; 9 p.m.

Wiseguys at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

July 8

"Beauty and the Beast" featuring Karel Marquez and KC Concepcion at the Meralco Theater. Call 3668631.

Mitch Valdes in A Rockin' Comedy concert at the Captain's Bar, Mandarin Oriental Manila.

Rhythm and Babes at Hyatt Regency's Calesa Bar; 10 p.m.

Rico J. Puno live in concert at Starmall Las Piñas; 8 p.m.

Nyoy Mannos and Pseudonymz at Suburbia

RJ and Bloomfields at RJ Guitar Bar along Jupiter St. Makati; 9 p.m.

Fat Session at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Rockin' Revival at Funnside, Timog Avenue, Quezon City

Erik Santos at SM Davao

July 9

Kyla at the Araneta Coliseum for the opening of the 68th Season of the Universities Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP).

Mitch Valdes in A Rockin' Comedy concert at the Captain's Bar, Mandarin Oriental Manila.

Escape at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Rivermaya and Nina in concert at Metropolis Star Alabang, 8 p.m.

Erik Santos at SM Cebu

Wiseguys and Ntwine at Suburbia

D Bo's Lunchbox at RJ Guitar Bar along Jupiter St. Makati; 9 p.m.

July 10

Session Road at Starmall Edsa, 4 p.m.

July 11

Freestyle at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Zyncxation at Suburbia

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3 (DOLBY) MONSTER IN LAW PG13
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(DOLBY) WAR OF THE WORLDS PG13

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4 (GOLD DTS) BATMAN BEGINS
5 (GOLD DOLBY) WAR OF THE WORLDS
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7 (GOLD DOLBY) HOTEL RWANDA
8 MONSTER IN LAW
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3 (DOLBY) FANTASTIC FOUR
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4 WAR OF THE WORLDS

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1:10 / 3:50 / 6:30 / 9:10
FANTASTIC FOUR
12:10 / 12:50 / 1:30 / 3:00
3:40 / 4:20 / 5:50 / 6:30
7:10 / 8:40 / 9:20 / 10:00
BATMAN BEGINS
1:00 / 3:50 / 6:40 / 9:30
CREEP
12:35 / 2:45 / 4:55 / 7:05 / 9:15

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❶ FANTASTIC FOUR 12:30 / 3:20 / 6:10 / 9:00
❷ WAR OF THE WORLDS 12:20 / 3:10 / 6:00 / 8:50
❸ BATMAN BEGINS 11:40 / 2:30 / 5:20 / 8:10
❹ KALAPATI SA GABI
❺ CREEP 11:30 / 1:40 / 3:50 / 6:00 / 8:10
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July 6, Wed. & July 8, Fri Talk N Text vs San Miguel
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July 9, Sat. 1pm Opening / 2pm UP vs UST Srs/ 4pm FEU vs UE Srs
July 10, Sunday UAAP GAMES 10am AdU vs NU Jrs, 12pnn DLSU vs ADMU Jrs, 2pm AdU vs NU Srs, 4pm DLSU vs ADMU Srs
JOHN MAXWELL ASIAN TOUR 2005
July 22 Friday 6:00 pm

CENTER EVENTS
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PERFORMANCES: Cadio, on July 8 Tropicana, on July 9 & Tots Tolentino, on July 10, at the Gateway Pavilion
EXHIBIT: Herbie: Fully Loaded life-size replica on display from July 7 to 13 at the Gateway Cineplex 10 lobby
SPECIAL APPEARANCE: Neil Gaiman Book Signing on July 11, 4pm at Fully Booked on Level 2 of Gateway Mall
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6 CREEP
7 MONSTER-IN-LAW

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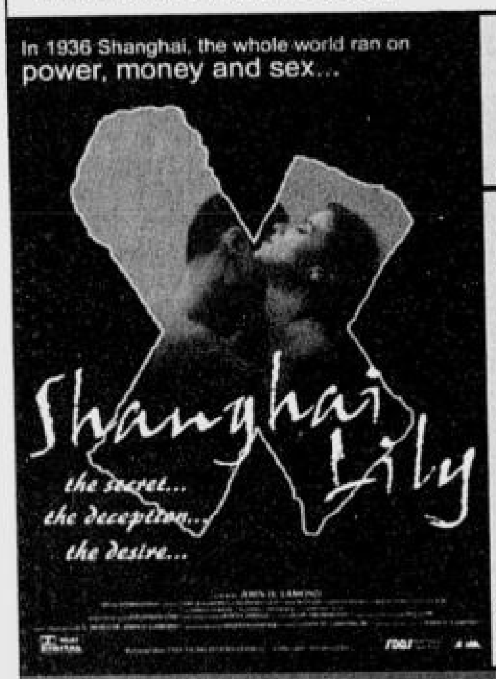
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	3	MONSTER-IN-LAW	
	4	FANTASTIC 4t	
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1	WAR OF THE WORLDS	
	2	FANTASTIC 4	
	3 THX	FANTASTIC 4	1 00, 3 30, 6 00, 8 30, 11 00 GUARANTEED SEATS
	4	BATMAN BEGINS	
	5	MONSTER-IN-LAW	
	6	FANTASTIC 4	
	7	FANTASTIC 4	
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1	WAR OF THE WORLDS	11:00, 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00
	2	FANTASTIC 4	11:10, 1:40, 4:10, 6:40, 9:10
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX	FANTASTIC 4	12:30, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS
	2 THX	FANTASTIC 4	2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00 GUARANTEED SEATS
	3	FANTASTIC 4	1:30, 4 00, 6 30 9 00 11 30 GUARANTEED SEATS
	4	FANTASTIC 4	1 00 3 30 6 00 8 30 11 00 GUARANTEED SEATS
	5	WAR OF THE WORLDS	GUARANTEED SEATS
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX	FANTASTIC 4	
	2	WAR OF THE WORLDS	
	3	FANTASTIC 4	
	4	FANTASTIC 4	
	5	MONSTER-IN-LAW	
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Our endangered movies

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by Rodel Rotoni

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

EVEN Laos has its own national film archives; we don't," laments Vicky D. Belarmino, archivist of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Film Division, and secretary of the Society of Film Archivists (Sofia).

Belarmino's sentiment has been echoed by Clodualdo "Doy" del Mundo Jr., award-winning scriptwriter, Sofia president, and head of the Cinema Committee of the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA).

In his writings on the subject, Del Mundo often bewails the fact that, while we habitually neglect our cinematic treasures, Asian neighbors like Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and even Mongolia have seen it fit to preserve and protect their screen masterpieces.

CLODUALDO del Mundo, Vicky Belarmino and Teddy Co

That was precisely the reason that Sofia was established in 1993, recalls Del Mundo. "In the very least, we aim to raise awareness on the importance of retrieving and restoring endangered films," he says.

"We are making an inventory of our existing movies and taking note of their condition," Belarmino adds.

The undertaking is made extra arduous because the target movies are scattered in different "little archives," Del Mundo admits. "Archiving is done by individual studios and government agencies."

These government-affiliated "archives" include the CCP, the University of the Philippines Film Institute, and the Philippine Information Agency (PIA).

(Since the PIA was reorganized, according to Belarmino and Del Mundo, it has been decided that its film collection will be moved to the Mowelfund Film Institute.)

Major studios past and present account for the privately-owned collections: LVN, Sampaguita, Premiere, Viva, FPJ, Reyna and ABS-CBN/Star Cinema.

Film archivists race against time to rescue cinematic treasures

"The ABS-CBN facility is the ideal," Del Mundo notes, "primarily because it is air-conditioned 24 hours a day." Which cannot be said of the country's other archives.

Maintaining a temperature of 15-20 degrees Celsius is vital in preventing the deterioration of old movies.

Teddy Co, film curator and member of the NCCA Committee on Cinema, identifies the archivist's three worst enemies—"war, chemistry and weather."

He explains: "Most of our pre-war movies were destroyed during World War II. As for films produced from 1946 to 1951, most titles were disposed of because of their high nitrate content, a fire hazard. In fact, Sampaguita and Premiere suffered two nitrate fires in the early '50s."

Heat, humidity

Tropical heat and high humidity pose a serious threat. Flash floods also claimed not a few masterpieces.

In 1981, during the Marcos regime, the Film Archives of the Philippines was put up under the Experimental Cinema of the Philippines.

Housing it in the basement of the Manila Film Center (erected on reclaimed land), however, violated a cardinal rule of archiving.

Co remembers: "One weekend, it rained nonstop for three days. Since no one was around, the room where the reels were stored was flooded. A lot of movies were lost then."

An urban legend proffers that Celso Ad. Castillo's "Burlesk Queen" was among the casualties in that deluge. "That's not true," Co says. "'Burlesk Queen' was ruined in a flood at the [private] SQ Laboratory."

The bigger foes, of course, are neglect, apathy and ignorance.

Co recounts how some old movies were butchered in a chemical process in which silver was retrieved from old black-and-white film stock.

"The price of silver shot up in the world market in the 1970s," Co explains. "I heard stories about studio employees that carted out reels of film that they sold for silver recovery. Studios were having financial problems and the employees were not getting paid. It was a tragedy."

What can be done to protect our endangered movies?

Legislation is not the only solution, Del Mundo asserts.

In fact, a "National Archives Bill" has been lost in the labyrinthine legislative process.

"I think the National Archives Bill has been archived," Belarmino jokes. "In other countries, they have a Legal Deposit Law, which requires producers to turn over a copy of each new movie to their National Archives. Since we don't have that, we need to work backwards and recover old movies."

Cultural imperative

"A National Archives bill is no longer necessary," Del Mundo points out, "because the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) is now mandated to take charge of this. It's just a matter of giving the FDCP enough funds to accomplish the task."

Since government support isn't forthcoming, he says, "producers, filmmakers [and] the private sector should get involved."

"Producers need to realize that it is profitable to protect their old movies," Belarmino says. "These can make money after the theatrical runs, via cable and VHS/VCD/DVD releases."

Most important of all, it is a cultural imperative.

"There are numerous movies we can be proud of," Del Mundo says. But, he qualifies, "classic films are not the only ones that deserve to be archived."

Even so-called commercial movies should be saved, he insists, "because they mirror the era and the culture in which they were made. And we can always learn a lot from the past."

ROSA Rosal and Tony Santos in "Biyaya ng Lupa," 1959

Saved by Sofia

HERE'S a list of Filipino films that have been "restored" through the efforts of Sofia, as of July 2004: "Ano ang Kulay ng Mukha ng Diyos? (Lea, 1985); "Banta ng Kahapon" (Hemisphere, 1977); "Biyaya ng Lupa" (LVN, 1959); "Dalagang Ilocana" (Sampaguita, 1954); "Giliw Ko" (LVN, 1939); "Jack and Jill" (Sampaguita, 1954); "Maalaala Mo Kaya?" (Sampaguita, 1954); "Malvarosa" (LVN, 1958); "MN" (Sampaguita, 1954); "The Moises Padilla Story" (MML, 1961); "Noli Me Tangere" (Bayanihan-Arriva, 1961); "Pagdating sa Dulo" (Frankesa, 1971); "Passionate Strangers" (Mike J. Parsons, 1966); "Sanda Wong" (Premiere-Chapman Ho, 1955); "Seksing-Seksi: Mapanghalina" (Nolasco, 1959); "Stardoom" (Lea, 1971); "Tunay na Ina" (Excelsior, 1939); "White Slavery" (Special People, 1985).

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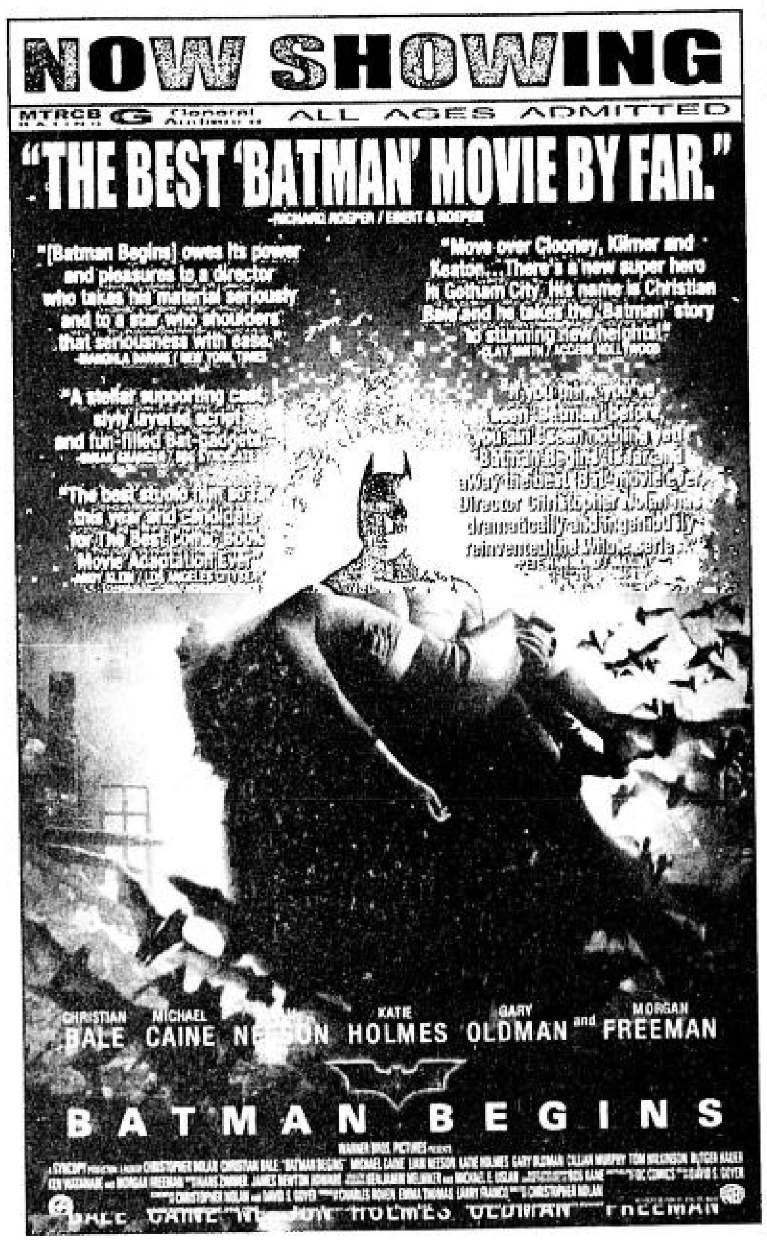
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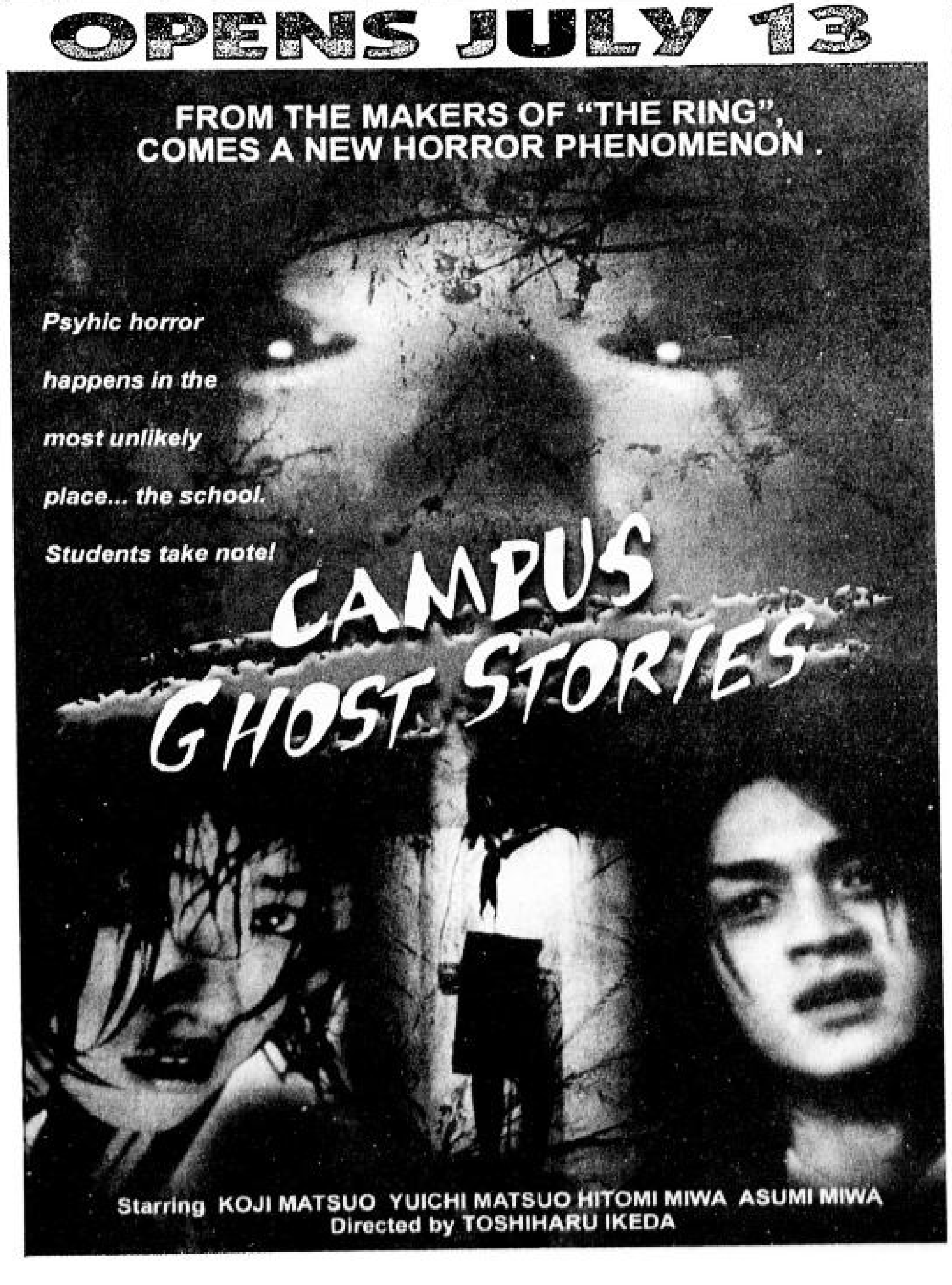
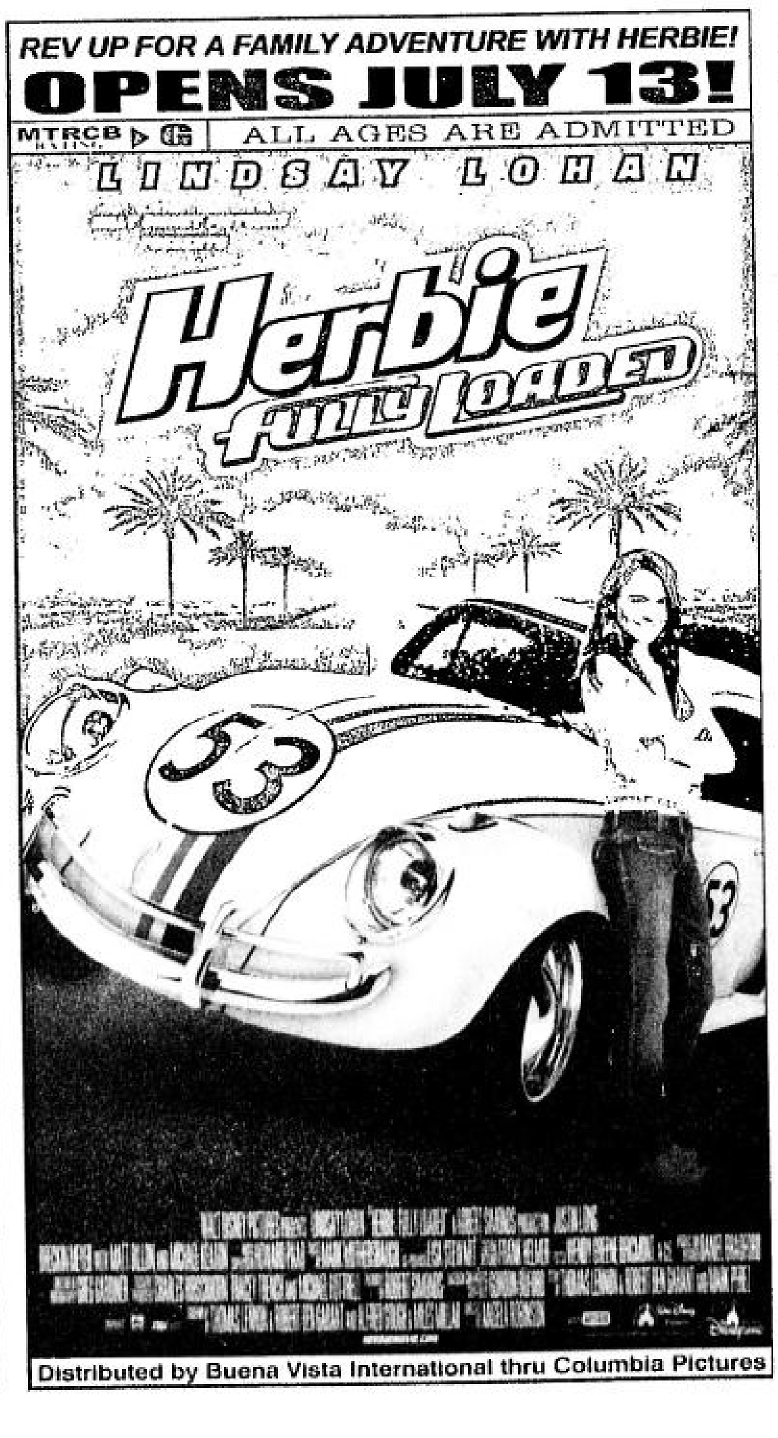
BATMAN BEGINS
WARNER BROS. PICTURES


OPENS JULY 13
FROM THE MAKERS OF "THE RING", COMES A NEW HORROR PHENOMENON.
Psyhic horror happens in the most unlikely place... the school. Students take note!
CAMPUS GHOST STORIES
Starring KOJI MATSUO YUICHI MATSUO HITOMI MIWA ASUMI MIWA
Directed by TOSHIHARU IKEDA


REV UP FOR A FAMILY ADVENTURE WITH HERBIE!
OPENS JULY 13!
MTRCB RATING G
ALL AGES ARE ADMITTED
LINDSAY LOHAN
Herbie FULLY LOADED
53
Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

ABS-CBN reviews stars' contracts

By Nini Valera

ABS-CBN has announced that it is currently reviewing the contracts of its stars amid reports that the network had asked its biggest talents to accept lower fees.

In a statement, ABS-CBN said: "[The] major review of [its] organization [is] aimed at maximizing the efficiency of its current operations. Part of this ongoing reorganization is the current review of the contracts of the network's roster of talents."

Consultation with the artists, talents and managers was in progress, the statement said, and "ABS-CBN is more than happy with their positive response to our organizational efficiency initiatives."

The network acknowledged the important role that these "artists, talents and managers play in rebuilding the organization."

Earlier, ABS CBN contract star Maricel Soriano waived the 20-percent yearly increase stipulated in her contract to show her support for the station. Soriano's talent manager, Wyngard Tracy, told INQUIRER Entertainment that he had voluntarily offered not to take the increase for the actress' role in the upcoming series "Vietnam Rose."

In another development, GMA 7 clarified that the network "never offered [ABS-CBN news anchor] Erwin Tulfo any job in the company."

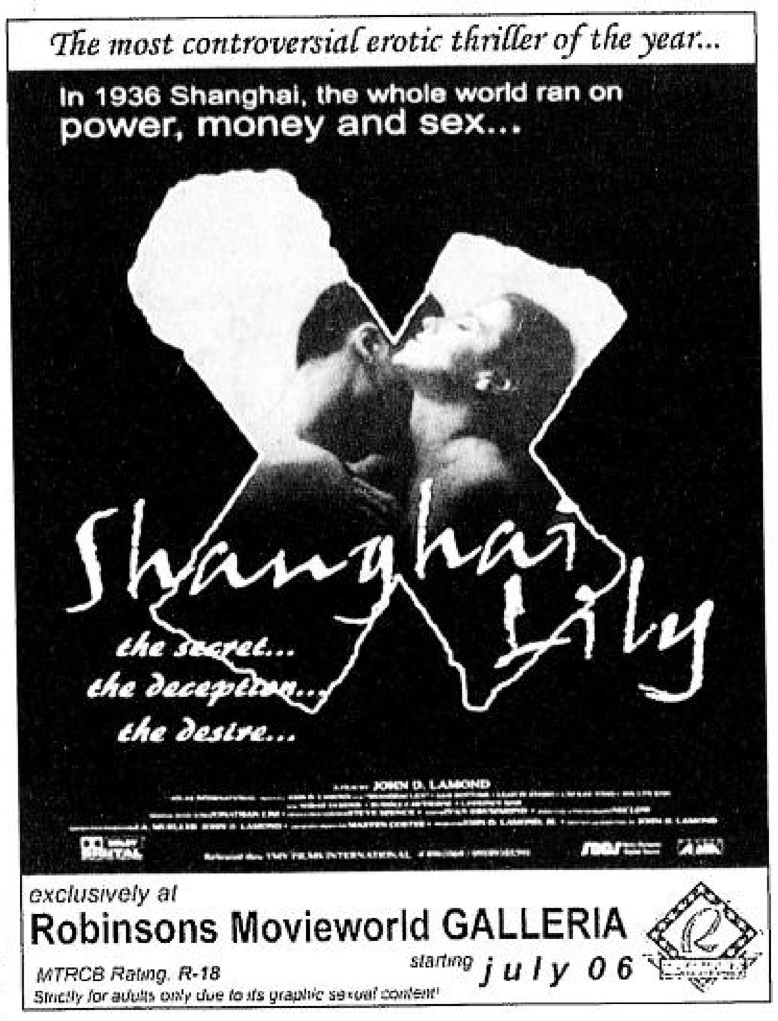
Tulfo is one of 35 regular employees in the news and current affairs department of ABS-CBN who earlier accepted retirement compensation packages.

Some of them, including Tulfo, Pia Hontiveros and Gene Orejana, were retained as "talents" to anchor certain news programs.

Tulfo told INQUIRER Entertainment last week he had received offers from GMA 7 and ABC 5, but that he decided to stick it out with ABS CBN. On Friday, Tulfo, who anchors the weekly news program "Magandang Gabi Bayan," clarified that he had talked to colleagues from GMA and ABC 5 "over a bottle of beer" about job options.

"This was a conversation with friends who happen to be managers of those networks," he explained. "I did not talk with any executive."

CONSTANTINE ON DVD
Keanu Reeve's latest starrer, the $75-million thriller "Constantine," described in the Los Angeles Daily News as "a smart, wildly entertaining ride," is now available on DVD. John Constantine is a warrior called to battle in a time when spirit-world bounds have been shattered. The deluxe DVD edition, at P550, is accompanied with bonus features, including a commentary by Francis Lawrence, a "Passive" music video by Perfect Circle, 18 minutes of deleted scenes, plus an alternate ending. Regular edition at P499.



The most controversial erotic thriller of the year...
In 1936 Shanghai, the whole world ran on power, money and sex...
Shanghai Lily
the secret... the deception... the desire...
A film by JOHN D. LAMOND
exclusively at
Robinsons Movieworld GALLERIA
starting july 06
MTRCB Rating. R-18
Strictly for adults only due to its graphic sexual content

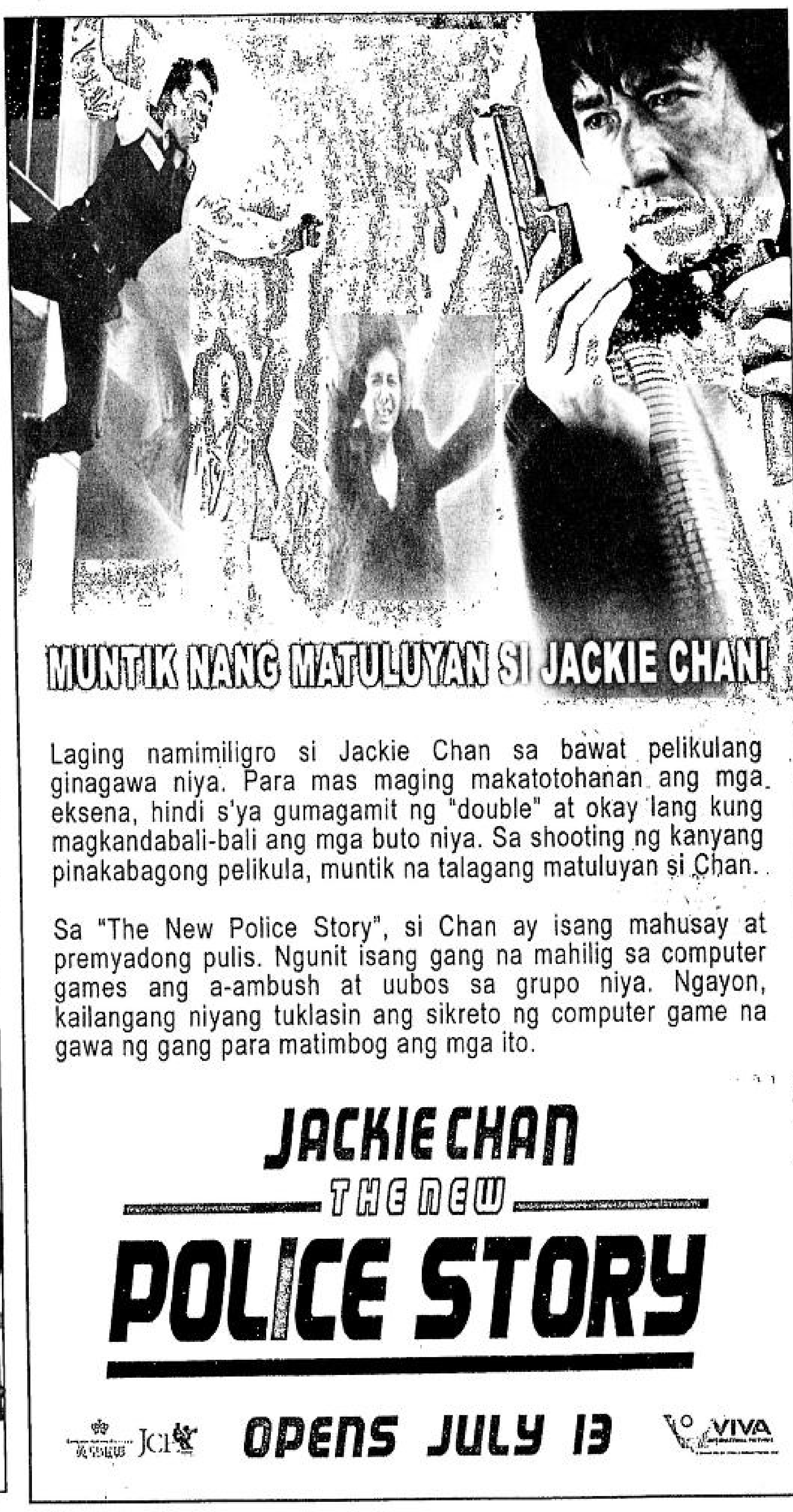
OPENS JULY 13
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
GRAB YOUR HANKIES, GIVE YOURSELF A GOOD CRY

"Take My Heart Back"

It'll be alright, you said, tonight.
Don't you cry,
Don't you shed a tear.
When you wake up, I will still be here.
When you wake up, we'll battle all your fears.
And now I'll take my heart back,
leave your pictures on the floor.
Steal back my memory,
I can't take it anymore
I've cried my eyes out,
Oh, and now I face the years.
The way you love me,
vanished all the tears.
Just a little more time was all we needed.
Just a little time for me to see.
Oh, the lights that life can give you.
Oh, how we get such free.

So now I'll take my heart back.
Leave your pictures on the floor.
Steal back my memory,
I can't take it anymore.
I've cried my eyes out,
Oh, and now I face the years.
The way you love me,
vanished all the tears.
Na-la-la-la, Na-la-la-la
La-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la
Oh-oh, ohh-ohh
[Music Sung and Composed by Jennifer Love Hewitt]

Jennifer Love Hewitt
Paul Nicholls
If Only
What if... life gives you a second chance... to love the one you lost?



MUNTIK NANG MATULUYAN SI JACKIE CHAN!

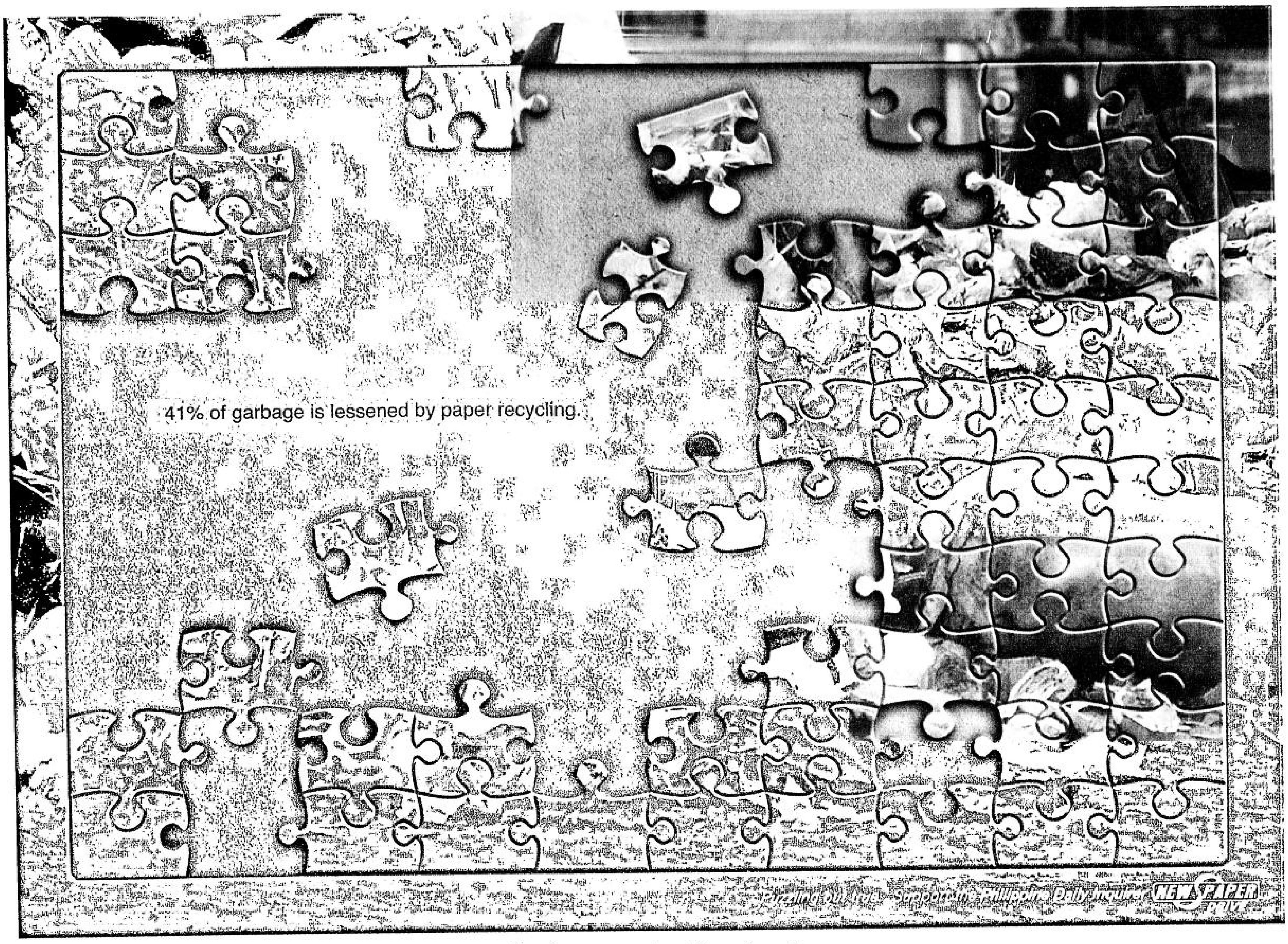
Laging namimiligro si Jackie Chan sa bawat pelikulang ginagawa niya. Para mas maging makatotohanan ang mga eksena, hindi s'ya gumagamit ng "double" at okay lang kung magkandabali-bali ang mga buto niya. Sa shooting ng kanyang pinakabagong pelikula, muntik na talagang matuluyan si Chan.

Sa "The New Police Story", si Chan ay isang mahusay at premyadong pulis. Ngunit isang gang na mahilig sa computer games ang a-ambush at uubos sa grupo niya. Ngayon, kailangang niyang tuklasin ang sikreto ng computer game na gawa ng gang para matimbog ang mga ito.

JACKIE CHAN
THE NEW
POLICE STORY
OPENS JULY 13
JCI
VIVA

MTRCB RATING ▶ R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE
OPENS TODAY!
PERSONS WITH WEAK HEARTS ARE ADVISED NOT TO SEE THIS FILM ALONE
FRANKA POTENTE
STAR OF BOURNE IDENTITY AND BOURNE SUPREMACY
TWICE THE HORROR OF JEEPERS CREEPERS!
CREEP
YOUR JOURNEY TERMINATES HERE

JOIN THE WAR! WATCH STEVEN SPIELBERG'S BIGGEST FILM OPENING EVER IN THE PHILIPPINES!
TOM CRUISE
A STEVEN SPIELBERG FILM
WAR OF THE WORLDS
THE LAST WAR ON EARTH WON'T BE STARTED BY HUMANS
NOW SHOWING
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13
PARENTAL GUIDANCE IS STRONGLY URGED FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 7 YRS
DREAMWORKS PICTURES
A united international pictures release through Solar Entertainment Corporation
SOUNDTRACK AVAILABLE ON DECCA
CATCH TOM CRUISE'S HIGHEST-GROSSING PHILIPPINE MOVIE OF ALL TIME!


41% of garbage is lessened by paper recycling.
NEWSPAPER DRIVE

Garbage wastes the planet

In this time of progress where increased consumption of industrial products is inevitable, waste production multiplies rapidly. Unless garbage is disposed and managed properly, we are burdening ourselves with the problem of land and air congestion.

However, we can all do our share in managing our waste via paper recycling. Through recycling, paper which comprises much of municipal waste is reused instead. Greenhouse gas emission from decaying paper is therefore lowered. Ultimately, this ecological contribution junks the garbage problem.

You can be one in managing our waste materials through the NewPaper Drive. Now on its fifth year, this Inquirer recycling campaign aims to make a difference in the environment together with the whole nation. **Linis Ganda, Inquirer's partner in making a difference in the environment, will pick-up old newspapers and tabloids for FREE within Metro Manila.** For inquiries, call Winnie or Michelle at 410-0383 or 448-7835. For pick-ups, call CARPEL Office at 430-0656 or 430-8411 and look for Weng, Lorrie or Myra. Pick-ups are from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm on weekdays, from June 25 to October 25, 2005.

Interested individuals may also drop off their newspapers and tabloids at the different Inquirer offices. In Manila: FEP Printing Press loading dock; 3817 Mascardo St. (behind the Inquirer building) Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City. Tel. No. 8974386 local 2160. Contact Person: Adrian Cruz. In Laguna: Printtown Bldg. Mamplasan, Biñan, Laguna. Tel. No. 8974386 local 2158. Contact Person: Adrian Cruz. In Cebu: FEP Printing Press, Warehouse #1, Menzo Compound National Highway, Pajo, Lapu Lapu City. Tel. No. (032) 3407970 to 71. Contact Person: Lenny Brua. In Davao: FEP Printing Press loading dock, Brgy. Ma-A, Ma-A Road, Davao City. Tel. No. (082) 844-1711 to 12. Contact Person: Rowena Balandra.

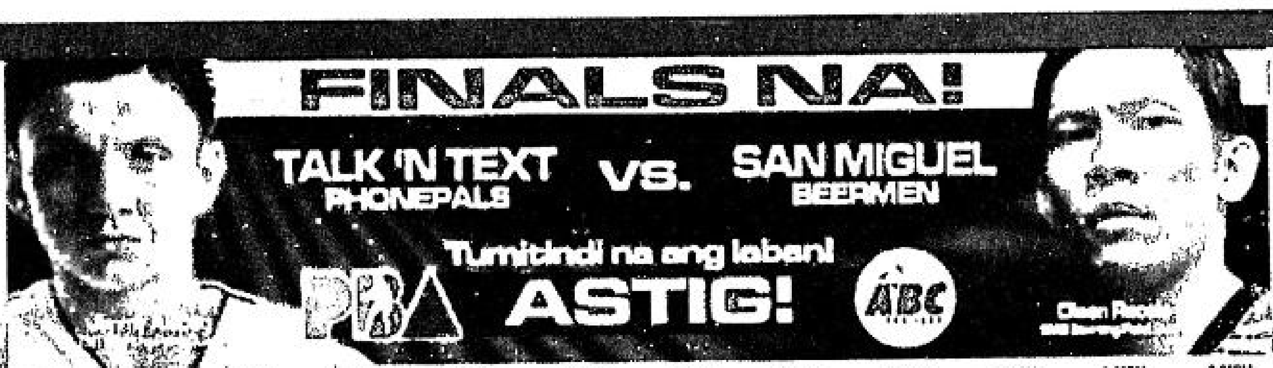
FEP will receive newspapers from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays in Makati, Wednesdays and Fridays in Laguna and weekdays in Cebu and Davao. Sellers will be paid P5.00 per kilo. Fit into this picture perfectly by selling us your old newspapers and tabloids of any kind now.

LINIS-GANDA

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

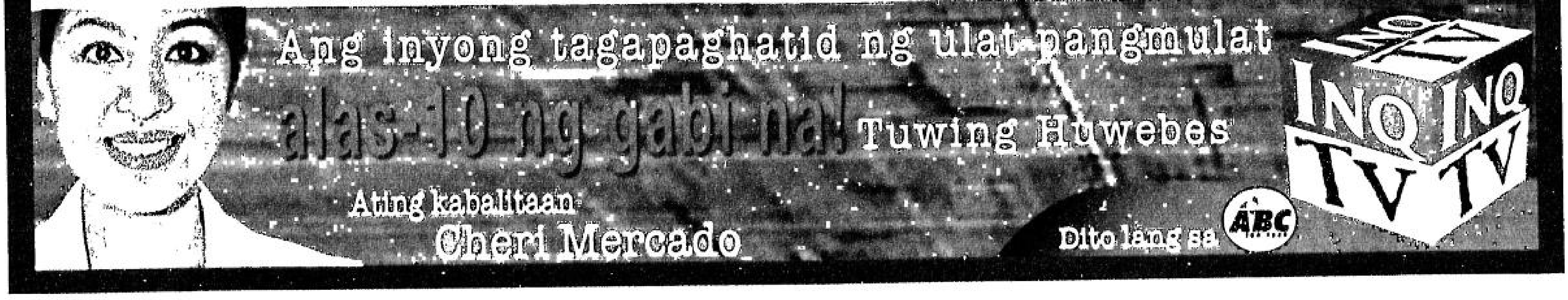
Wednesday, July 6, 2005



ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Showbiz No. 1	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Qpids	TV Patrol World		Meteor Garden Full Edition	Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Kampanerang Kuba	Ikaw Ang Lahat Sa Akin	Oh! Feel Young	Yes Yes Show			Insider
ABC 5			EZ Shop		PBA				Sentro	PBA					Big News	Dokyu		ESPN Golf	
GMA 7	Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Now and Forever	Glass Shoes	Tenjho Tenge	Shaman King	Flame Of Recca	Full House	24 Oras		Dama		Encantadia	Extra Challenge		Atbc Cal	Nuts Entertainment			Saksi
RPN 9		Metro TV Shopping	Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	The Insider	NBA On RPN					Extreme Make-Over		Newswatch Now	Keep up the Good Work w/ Joey Lina		Pangako Mo
IBC 13		EZ Shop		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Lifestyle		On Air Tambayan		Direk	Junior Reyes Report	Bestfriends	Celebrity Single	Retro TV	IBC News Tonite	Breaking Barriers	
JackTV	Banzai	X-Men	Justice League	Wwe Raw				Fitter	Just For Laughs	Mad TV		Dr. Katz	Premium Blend	Shorties Watching Shorties	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Mad TV		The Sib Show	Street Smarts
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	The Fairly Odd Parents	Cow At The Moo-vies	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Yakkity Yak	Chalkzone	Rocket Power	Hey Arnold!	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	Rugrats
MYX	MYX Firsts	Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	My MYX	Take 5	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Pop MYX	Urban MYX	MYX Live!		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Commited	Knock First	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Elimidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	Complete Savages	What I Like About You	Veronica Mars		Last Comic Standing		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
Studio 23						Super Gals		Batman Beyond	Beyblade	Wazzup Wazzup	Mutant X	C.S.I. (8:15PM)		Las Vegas		News Central	Oprah		Just Shoot Me
AXN		The Amazing Race 6		Next Action Star		Ripley's Believe It or Not		The Associates		Alias (Season III)		Guinness World Records 50 Years, 50 Records		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 5)		Fear Factor (Season V)		CSI: NY (Season I)	
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Buffy The Vampire Slayer		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	One Tree Hill		The Practice		JAG		Friends	Oprah Winfrey Show
CNN		Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		Your World Today	
National Geographic		Showreel Asia		Last Chance Journeys		The Sea Hunters		Wildlife Detectives	Insects From Hell	Wow		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials		Showreel Asia		Deep Jungle	
Solar Sports			TV Shopping	Sudirman Cup SF '05			Kolv Magazine	TV Over Time	WTA '05 Family Circle Cup Finals				Sports Desk	2005 Fivb World Grand Prix				NBA Inside Stuff	NBA Action
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Moto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Wolfgang Puck's	E! Entertainment Special 9 Celebrity Yearbook		You're Invited	Life & Style		Style Star	Nigella Bites II	Breathing Room	Genuine Article
HBO			Doctor Detroit (3:40PM)				One True Thing (5:20 PM)				Sgt. Bilko			Avenging Angelo			Fair Game (10:35PM)		
Star Movies				Slammed			Sabretooth (5:40PM)				Dick (7:20 PM)			Face/Off					Shadow Of Fear
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	The Woody Woodpecker Show	X-Men Evolution	Static Shock	Mucha Lucha!	Megas XLR	Zoids Fusors	Medabots	The Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Dexter's Laboratory	Time Squad	Thundercats	Mucha Lucha!	Megas XLR
ESPN				Tour De France 2005	2005 Kaohsiung World Pool Championship							Sportscenter Asia	2005 Kaohsiung World Pool Championship						
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	So Little Time	Buzz Lightyear Of Star Command	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	House Of Mouse	Recess: Taking The 5th Grade			So Little Time	Sabrina, The Animated Series	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	George Of The Jungle 2	
Cinemax	Dead Silence	Mother May I Sleep With Danger?			Demolition Man (5:45 PM)				Prehysteria (7:40 PM)			Star Trek Nemesis				Perdita Durango (10:55PM)			
Hallmark Channel	Who's The Boss	Missing		HCA: The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Mad About You	Who's The Boss	The Nanny	Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye		Missing		Mr. Saint Nick			Strong Medicine (10:35PM)		Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye
Discovery Channel		Science Mysteries		Science Frontiers		Wolf Battlefields		Wild Weather		Global Flyer		First Time Film Makers	Hour China	Mythbusters		Extraordinary Experiences: The Veils Of Rajasthan		Hour Asia	
MTV Philippines			Hangin Out at MTV		MTV Get Spotted		TRL		Backstreet Boys Incomplete	MTV Divas		Wade Robson	Dismissed	Boiling Point	Pimp My Ride	On Board at MTV	Making the Movie Sin City	VH1 Video Collection	
Sports Plus						FMX		Porsche md 5	Pepsi 400 Highlights		Tour De France	World's Greatest Auto Shows		Nopi Tunerversion	BD Bora-Bora	Tour De France	Ultimate Fighting Championship		

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.


Ang inyong tagapaghatid ng ulat-pangmulat
alas-10 ng gabi na! Tuwing Huwebes
Ating kabalitaan
Cheri Mercado
Dito lang sa ABC
INQ TV

DUNKIN' DONUTS Slabsters

We're turning 20!

Inquirer turns 20

. . . and we asked famous friends to sing about it in a big weekend to-do

SECURITY personnel at the Glorietta had a handful on Sunday when the Philippine Daily Inquirer launched the six-month celebration of its 20th anniversary.

Ushering Regine Velasquez, Ai-Ai de las Alas, Parokya ni Edgar, The CompanY and Nyoy Volante in and out of the Activity Center was certainly no mean feat—not on a payday weekend, and certainly not with thousands attracted to the PDI activity booths.

Each one of the rated-A guest performers turned up at the respective appointed hour, being the notable pros that they are. And every time one of them took the stage, the audience went wild.

Regine, Asia's Songbird—stunning in a simple cocktail dress in caramel hues (see photo)—sang two songs, "Ako'y Iyong-Iyo" and "Shine," that felt like a full concert to the adoring spectators.

Other bands who came to celebrate the event with us were: True Faith, Stringskin, Thor, Keystone and Out-of-the-Box.

(More photos on pages 2 and 3.)

OPENING TODAY

Fantastic Four

Directed by Tim Story
Stars Ioan Gruffudd, Michael Chiklis, Jessica Alba, Chris Evans

SUMMARY: When an experimental space voyage goes awry, four people get toasted by cosmic rays and their lives are changed forever. Reed Richards, inventor and leader of the group, can now stretch his body and so becomes Mr. Fantastic. His girlfriend Sue Storm can become invisible and decides to call herself the Invisible Woman. Her younger brother Johnny Storm can control fire and becomes the Human Torch. Pilot Ben Grimm is turned into a super-strong rock creature and calls himself The Thing. Together, they use their unique powers to foil the evil plans of Doctor Doom.

No available name brand reviews on the 'Net since the worldwide release is today. Kidgeek from USA wrote this review for imdb.com: "This movie is pure summer popcorn fun! ... Jessica Alba is HOT HOT HOT. I love Chiklis... he is awesome as The Thing. My girlfriend loves Julian McMahon... he was good as Doom. The best was Johnny Storm [who] really surprised me... I didn't know much about the Fantastic 4 before I went [to see the movie] and now I'm definitely into the characters. The effects are great... a great summer movie. [It's] not going to win any awards, but [it's] perfect fun and one way to get out of the summer heat."

Creep

Directed by Christopher Smith
Stars Franka Potente, Vas Blackwood, Ken Campbell

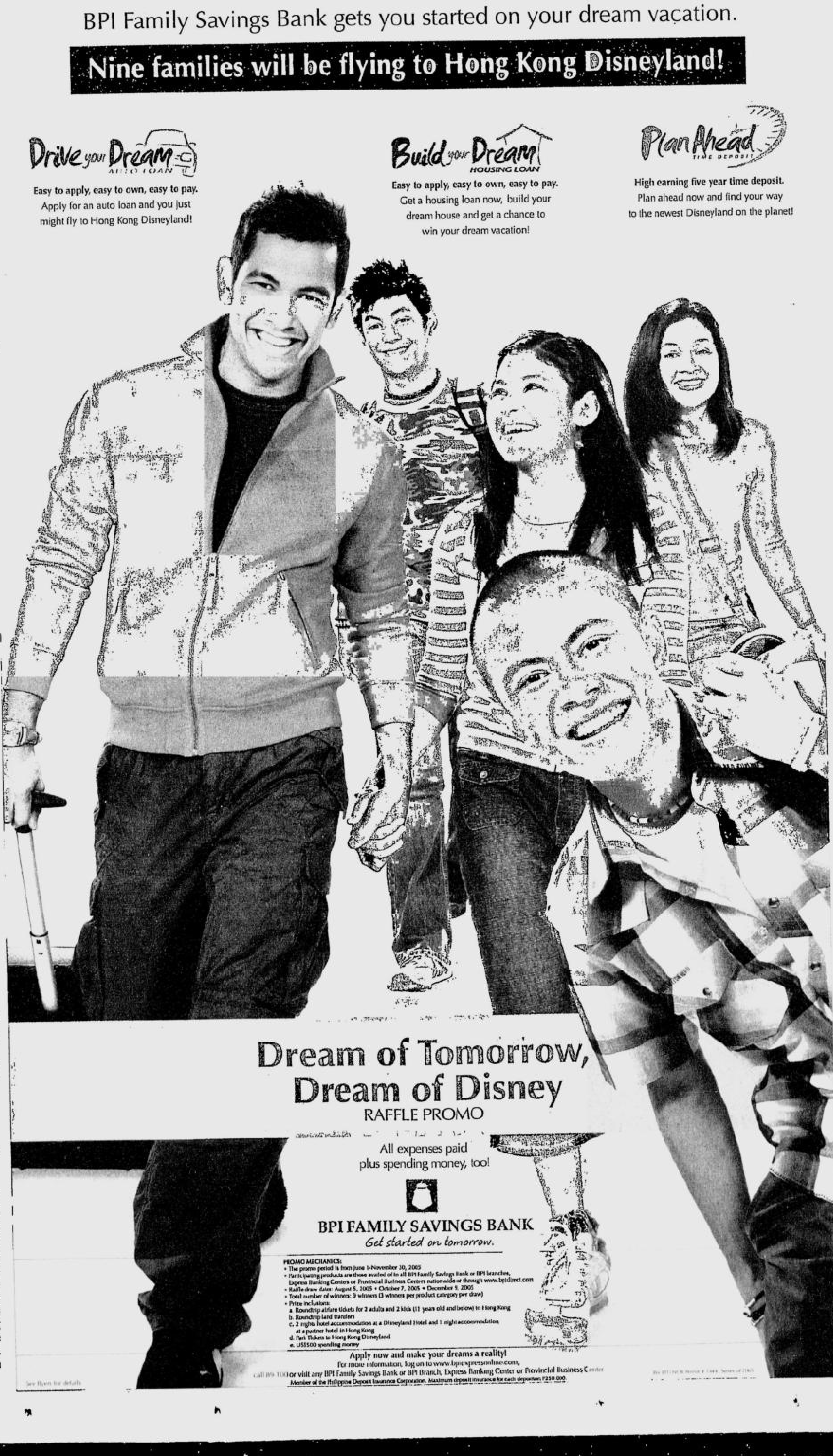
SUMMARY: Trapped in a London subway station, a woman being pursued by a potential attacker enters the unknown labyrinth of tunnels beneath the city's streets.

Peter Bradshaw, in his Jan. 28 review for The Guardian, wrote: "The unending horror-show that is the London Underground tube system is still an under-used resource for splatter pictures, which is why this strange Anglo-German co-production grabs the attention—for a while at any rate. It is a very, very yucky slasher film starring German actress Franka Potente (from 'Run Lola Run'). It implies—if I have got this right—that there is a direct connection between the London tube's justly notorious Northern line and the stinkiest sewer tunnels and also a secret but semi-disused subterranean hospital lab for experimenting on children. *Eeeeuuuwww.* Those of us who have to travel on the Northern line have suspected as much for years. ... 'Creep' has some intriguing location work and interesting ideas, but nausea and boredom soon overtake the chills."

Shanghai Lily

Directed by John D. Lamond
Stars Sam Bottoms, Leah di Stasio, Lim Kay Tong, Ava Lyn Koh

BRITISH businessman John Charles is murdered. His wife Helen travels to Shanghai and learns that John was shot dead in the arms of a call girl at a popular nightspot. Police are mystified. Helen finds a lead in Lily, a mysterious young Chinese orphan girl, who seems to know what happened to John. Helen ends up working as a taxi dancer in a club and meets Alex, an American businessman who claims to have known her late husband. He agrees to help her find John's killer because he's falling for her. Unknown to Helen, Lily and Alex are lovers. Then Noi, a mute girl, is murdered. We'll stop here because we're getting a headache.


BPI Family Savings Bank gets you started on your dream vacation.
Nine families will be flying to Hong Kong Disneyland!

Drive your Dream AUTO LOAN
Easy to apply, easy to own, easy to pay.
Apply for an auto loan and you just might fly to Hong Kong Disneyland!

Build your Dream HOUSING LOAN
Easy to apply, easy to own, easy to pay.
Get a housing loan now, build your dream house and get a chance to win your dream vacation!

PlanAhead TIME DEPOSIT
High earning five year time deposit.
Plan ahead now and find your way to the newest Disneyland on the planet!

Dream of Tomorrow, Dream of Disney
RAFFLE PROMO
All expenses paid
plus spending money, too!

BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK
Get started on tomorrow.

PROMO MECHANICS:
- The promo period is from June 1-November 30, 2005
- Participating products are those availed of in all BPI Family Savings Bank or BPI branches, Express Banking Centers or Provincial Business Centers nationwide or through www.bpidirect.com
- Raffle draw dates: August 5, 2005 • October 7, 2005 • December 9, 2005
- Total number of winners: 9 winners (3 winners per product category per draw)
- Prize inclusions:
  a. Roundtrip airfare tickets for 2 adults and 2 kids (11 years old and below) to Hong Kong
  b. Roundtrip land transfers
  c. 2 nights hotel accommodation at a Disneyland Hotel and 1 night accommodation at a partner hotel in Hong Kong
  d. Park Tickets to Hong Kong Disneyland
  e. US$500 spending money

Apply now and make your dreams a reality!
For more information, log on to www.bpiexpressonline.com,
call 89-100 or visit any BPI Family Savings Bank or BPI Branch, Express Banking Center or Provincial Business Center
Member of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation. Maximum deposit insurance for each depositor P250,000.
See flyers for details

Experience SM movietime
movie schedules events promos

CINEMA

Here are the results for the last week's poll!
"What movies are you into?"
TOP FIVE MOVIES
- Monster-in-law ★★★★★
- War of the worlds ★★★★
- Herbie Fully Loaded ★★★★
- Fantastic Four ★★★
- Happily Ever After ★★

Ice Princess

A Special Back-to-School Presentation
An inspiring story about following your own dreams
Ice Princess
Big things happen to those who dream big.
Watch it EXCLUSIVELY at SM Manila today!
Wave 89.1
Official Radio Partner

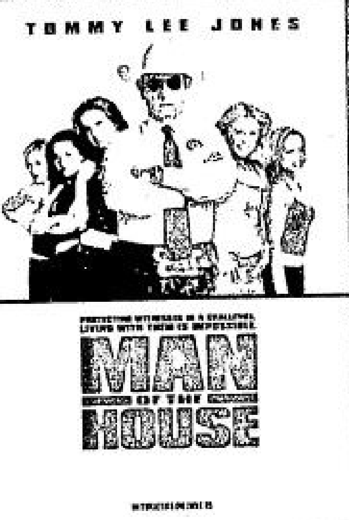
FOR GUARANTEED SEATS

the podium 633-8976
1 FANTASTIC FOUR 01:00FS/01:30MF/03:45/06:00/08:15 10:00LFS/10:30LMF/12:15END
2 WAR OF THE WORLDS 11:30FS/12:00MF/02:30/05:00/7:30 09:30LFS/10:00LMF/12:00END

megamall 633-1901
WAR OF THE WORLDS 12:10FS/12:40MF/03:40/06:40/ 09:00LFS/09:40LMF/12:00END

cebu (032) 231-3876
1 FANTASTIC FOUR 12:10FS/12:30MF/02:40/04:50/07:00 08:55LFS/09:10LFS/11:05END
2 WAR OF THE WORLDS 11:40FS/11:50MF/02:15/04:40/07:05 09:05LFS/09:30LMF/11:30END
3 FANTASTIC FOUR 10:40FS/10:50MF/01:00/03:10/05:20/07:30 09:25LFS/09:40LMF/11:35END

FEEL EXCLUSIVE Now SHOWING EXCLUSIVELY at SM CINEMA



Witness this hilarious comedy about a Texan ranger teamed up with cheerleaders! Watch it EXCLUSIVELY at SM Southmall today!
WAVE 89.1

METRO MANILA

SM MEGAMALL
1 BATMAN BEGINS
2 MR. & MRS. SMITH
3 FANTASTIC FOUR
4 WAR OF THE WORLDS
5 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
6 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
7 WAR OF THE WORLDS
8 MONSTER-IN-LAW
9 CREEP
10 FANTASTIC FOUR
11 NASAAN KA MAN
12 HAPPILY EVER AFTER

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 HOTEL RWANDA
2 FANTASTIC FOUR
3 SHUTTER
4 WAR OF THE WORLDS
5 NASAAN KA MAN
6 MR. & MRS. SMITH
7 FANTASTIC FOUR
8 BATMAN BEGINS
9 MONSTER-IN-LAW
10 HAPPILY EVER AFTER
11 WAR OF THE WORLDS
12 CREEP

SM NORTH EDSA
1 FANTASTIC FOUR
2 WAR OF THE WORLDS
3 BATMAN BEGINS
4 WAR OF THE WORLDS
5 MONSTER-IN-LAW
6 FANTASTIC FOUR
7 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
8 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

SM CITY STA MESA
1 WAR OF THE WORLDS
2 BATMAN BEGINS
3 FANTASTIC FOUR
4 CREEP
5 FANTASTIC FOUR
6 PREMONITION
7 NASAAN KA MAN
8 HAPPILY EVER AFTER
9 MONSTER-IN-LAW
10 MR. & MRS. SMITH

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 FANTASTIC FOUR
2 MAN OF THE HOUSE
3 WAR OF THE WORLDS
4 FANTASTIC FOUR
5 MONSTER-IN-LAW
6 MR. & MRS. SMITH
7 HAPPILY EVER AFTER
8 NASAAN KA MAN
9 CREEP
10 BATMAN BEGINS

SM CITY MANILA
1 WAR OF THE WORLDS
2 MR. & MRS. SMITH
3 ICE PRINCESS
4 FANTASTIC FOUR
5 MONSTER-IN-LAW
6 FANTASTIC FOUR
7 NASAAN KA MAN
8 BATMAN BEGINS
9 CREEP
10 HOUSE OF WAX
11 SHUTTER
12 HAPPILY EVER AFTER

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1 BATMAN BEGINS
2 FANTASTIC FOUR
3 FANTASTIC FOUR
4 WAR OF THE WORLDS

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 FANTASTIC FOUR
2 BATMAN BEGINS
3 WAR OF THE WORLDS
4 FANTASTIC FOUR

LUZON

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 FANTASTIC FOUR
2 FANTASTIC FOUR
3 WAR OF THE WORLDS
4 HOTEL RWANDA
5 HAPPILY EVER AFTER
6 COACH CARTER

SM CITY BACOOR
1 MONSTER-IN-LAW
2 HAPPILY EVER AFTER
3 FANTASTIC FOUR
4 BATMAN BEGINS
5 FANTASTIC FOUR
6 WAR OF THE WORLDS
7 NASAAN KA MAN
8 MR. & MRS. SMITH

SM CITY DASMARINAS
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SM CITY LUCENA
1 FANTASTIC FOUR
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SM CITY BAGUIO
1 FANTASTIC FOUR
2 IN GOOD COMPANY
3 WAR OF THE WORLDS
4 FANTASTIC FOUR

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2 WAR OF THE WORLDS
3 COACH CARTER
4 FANTASTIC FOUR

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1 WAR OF THE WORLDS
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3 FANTASTIC FOUR
4 SIN CITY

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 FANTASTIC FOUR
2 WAR OF THE WORLDS
3 FANTASTIC FOUR
4 BATMAN BEGINS
5 BIRTH
6 LOVE ME IF YOU DARE
7 MR. & MRS. SMITH
8 FANTASTIC FOUR

SM CITY ILOILO
1 FANTASTIC FOUR
2 RESERVED
3 WAR OF THE WORLDS
4 PREMONITION
5 A LOT LIKE LOVE
6 FANTASTIC FOUR
7 RESERVED
8 BATMAN BEGINS

SM CITY DAVAO
1 FANTASTIC FOUR
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3 HAPPILY EVER AFTER
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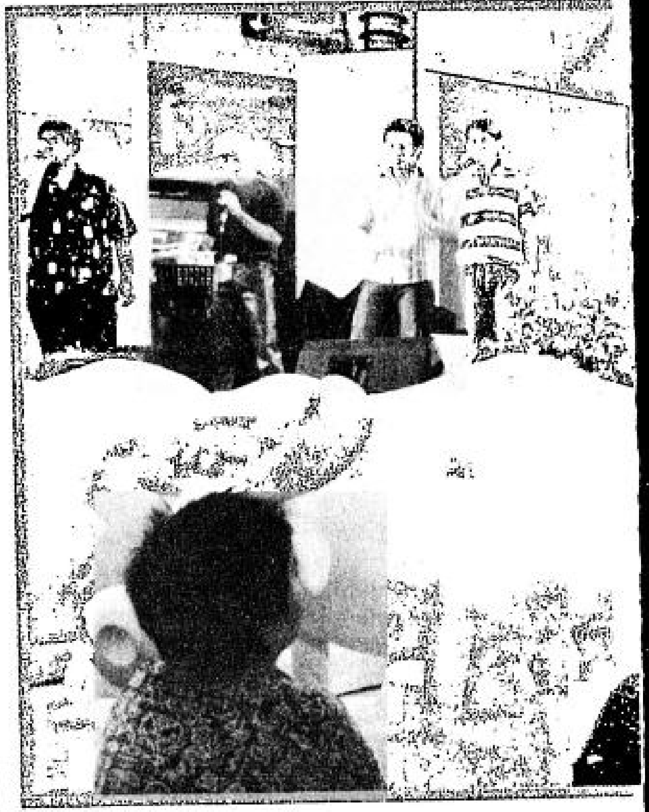
"WE'RE sober today," vocalist Chito Miranda of Parokya ni Edgar assured us, "because there are kids around." But we didn't want them "sober," we protested. Boy, were we glad we got that across. The boys—Chito and Gab Cheekee (in photo), Dindin Moreno, Darius Semaña and Buwi Meneses—roughed it up just right for the mixed crowd. A fan stood up on her monobloc chair, singing with the band the whole time it took to deliver long versions of two monster hits, plus a medley. Whew.

PHOTOS BY RAFFY LERMA



Birthda up on t

LOS ANGELES—Tom Cruise celebrated his 43rd birthday on Sunday atop the worldwide box office with "War of the Worlds," the costly alien-invasion thriller directed by Steven Spielberg.

The impressive $204.2-million global tally, reported on Sunday by distributor Paramount Pictures, includes $101.7 million from its first five days of release in North America, where business is getting a much-needed boost from Monday's July 4 holiday in the United States.

Beats 'Batman'

While solid, the North American haul falls short of the record $152 million that "Spider-Man 2" earned in its first five days during the July 4 span last year.

"War of the Worlds" did, however, beat the opening mark of incumbent box office champion

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
Sunday
rer turns 20
Survey says PDI is No. 1

ASIDE from eliciting shrieks from female fans, heartthrob Nyoy Volante showed off an impressive range, interpreting songs by artists as diverse as Joey Smith ("Beep Beep") and Madonna ("Crazy for You"). But of course, his own hits with the Mannos were just as wildly applauded.

TALK about class and credentials: The CompanY was the perfect guest for PDI's fête. Frontman Moy Ortiz announced that the band was marking its 20th year in the biz, too. No mean feat—we know exactly what that feels like. Moy and pals Sweet Plantado (eight months preggy!), Reuben Laurente, Annie Quintos and Cecille Bautista (André Castillo is abroad) regaled—repeat, regaled—their listeners with five show-stoppers, including the instrumental number "Mission: Impossible," which they did a cappella. Go figure.

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INQUIRER
Inquirer turns 20

OUT OF THE BOX [illegible]

y boy Tom wakes op of US charts

"Batman Begins," which earned $72.9 million during its first five days two weeks ago, albeit without the benefit of a holiday crowd.

Internationally, "War of the Worlds" has earned $102.5 million from 78 countries, including $15 million in the United Kingdom and $15.5 million in Japan, a Paramount spokesperson said.

"War of the Worlds," budgeted at about $135 million, began its campaign on Wednesday with $21.3 million, topping the $15-million Wednesday start of "Batman Begins," but not the $40-million bow of "Spider-Man 2."

Saturday's sales of $22.7 million represent the biggest single-day haul for both Paramount and Cruise, said the studio, a unit of Viacom Inc.

For the "traditional" three-day period beginning Friday, the film earned $66 million, the second-highest number for 2005, behind the $108.4-million weekend for "Star Wars: Episode III—Revenge of the Sith." That film opened on a Thursday with midnight screenings, making comparisons with "War" difficult.

Unorthodox publicity

Some Hollywood commentators have speculated that the movie's prospects could be hurt by Cruise's unorthodox publicity campaign. The usually strait-laced actor has raised eyebrows by giddily professing his love for fiancée Katie Holmes, and defiantly extolling the superiority of Scientology over psychiatry.

But the critics liked the movie, which is based on the novel by Victorian writer H.G. Wells.

"Batman Begins" led the field last weekend with $27.6 million.

Reuters

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Censors board suspends 'Extra Challenge'

By Marinel R. Cruz

GMA 7's top-rating reality program "Extra Challenge" was slapped with a one-day suspension by the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) on Monday, July 4, after a Muslim group complained to the censors board about the show's "Pasaway sa Dubai" series aired last month.

MTRCB Chair Marissa Laguardia announced this even after "Extra Challenge" co-host Paolo Bediones apologized to all those offended by the series.

Laguardia said at least one Muslim group felt slighted when "Extra Challenge" contestants were asked to memorize an Islamic prayer called "Al Fattha," said to be the equivalent of "The Lord's Prayer," while performing their challenges.

In a memorandum dated July 1, Laguardia said the complaint came from "Muslim Representative MujiV Hatanan, who accused the show's producers of the highest form of [rudeness] for showing non-Muslim contestants memorizing the Muslim prayer."

Improperly dressed

The MTRCB chief added that she personally found the challenge "offensive."

"Every religion should be treated with respect," Laguardia pointed out. "The challengers simply memorized the prayer. They weren't taught what it means."

She added that challengers Rufa Mae Quinto, Ara Mina and Aubrey Miles did not even wear "proper Muslim attire" while praying. "The girls were wearing skimpy clothes. They were in shorts and sexy tops."

Said Laguardia in a memo addressed to GMA 7 program management head Jose Mari Abacan: "Since that act was considered offensive by the Muslim community, [and was] in violation of their custom, the Board finds it necessary to impose an appropriate administrative sanction on 'Extra Challenge.' The Board hereby suspends the said TV program from being aired on July 4."

While taping the show's "Dagundong sa Hong Kong" series earlier, Bediones explained to INQUIRER Entertainment that the challenges were not in the least meant to insult the Muslim community. "But we made a mistake, and for that we apologize."

Also 2 cable channels

Paolo said his group had asked "a Filipino representative" if it were acceptable to use the prayer as part of the challenge. His group was given permission, he said.

The MTRCB also banned from airing shows for 15 days two cable channels caught violating the parental guidance classification allowed for television.

According to Laguardia's memo to Sky Cable Vice President for TV programming, Juno Henares-Chuidan, Sky Cable's Channel 76 aired on June 20, at 6:30 a.m., a movie titled "Dos Rombos," which showed "pumping scene, breast exposure, woman removing the underwear of another woman and woman licking a vibrator."

Destiny Cable's Channel 52, or Wowow Channel, aired on June 24 scenes from the movie "The Hard Word" (1 p.m.), "Eternal Love" (2 p.m.) and "Love Actually" (3 p.m.) that contained "double breast exposures" and "breast mashing scenes," said Laguardia's memo to Renato F. Bautista, the network's vice president for administration.

The MTRCB suspended the two cable channels from July 4 to July 18.

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Hollywood is a state of mind

TO FILIPINO film actors and fans, Hollywood is more than just an entertainment capital, it's a state of mind. Thanks (or, more properly, no thanks) to our deathless colonial mentality, "Hollywood" is still held up as the Holy Grail for local wannabes who want to make is as international stars.

From time to time, some of them put their flourishing careers here on hold to pursue their dream of making it big in Hollywood. Alas, most of them end up, not in front of a camera, but behind a nightspot's bar, mixing drinks for strangers with more money and career prospects than they have.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Even local film fans are caught up in the spell of Hollywood, preferring its cinematic products to our homegrown variety.

This colonial cultural preference is in fact one of the main reasons the Filipino movie industry is in dire straits, even as makers of imported blockbusters crow about breaking one local box office record after another.

Talent has no race, nationality or belief system

The result of this pop-cultural myopia is that movies in general remain popular, but they no longer speak to or for this country's specific audience. Thus has cinema lost its cultural or personal pertinence, even as Hollywood and its products reign triumphant all over the world.

A way out

Is there a way out of this cultural cul de sac? Yes, but it requires us to recognize and excise the roots of the problem as they're found in our early miseducation to prefer foreign products, because we have been trained by our colonizers to believe that they are inherently superior to local productions.

This is, of course, a principle of dubious worth, since provenance isn't a reliable gauge for quality and worth. It all depends on the talent of the originating artist and talent has no nationality, race or belief system.

After appreciating how this colonial mentality has compromised our judgment and value standards, we need to demystify and demythologize our vaunted Hollywood dream.

To reverse our initial statement, we have to remind ourselves that the Hollywood that we have seen as a state of mind is also a place made up of many different addresses, some choice and others much less so.

The way "Hollywood" is being bandied about here, you'd think that all productions emanating from Los Angeles are on the up and up, and worthy of our excited attention. Alas, many "Hollywood" productions are in fact small and insignificant movies whose only claim to "fame" is the fact that they were shot in LA-LA-Land.

Unfortunately, press releases about them feed on our knee-jerk idolatry of all things imported, so these itty-bitty movies generate much more attention locally than they deserve.

The best revenge

In the light of this abiding misappreciation, our best defense is to diminish Hollywood to gollywood, to lollywood, and then down to follywood. That would be the best revenge of all.

At 8 p.m. on July 16 at the CCP Main Theater, three generations of the country's top classical artists perform together in "Operanow." Arias to be sung include Puccini's "Quartet" from "La Boheme," "Ritorna Vincitor" from "Aida," Rossini's "Largo Al Factotum" from "Barber of Seville," Bizet's "Chanson Boheme" from "Carmen," Orff's "O Fortuna" from "Carmina Burana," and De Leon's "Kay Tamis ng Buhay" from "Noli Me Tangere."

Directed by **Floy Quintos**, with Prof. **Herminigildo Ranera** as musical director and conductor, "Operanow" features a host of artists, including **Jonathan Velasco, Jai Sabas-Aracama, Karina Balajadia, Sal Malaki, Irma Potenciano, Fides Cuyugan-Asensio** and **Noel Azcona.**

"Operanow" is presented by the Philippine Opera Company and the Cultural Center of the Philippines, in cooperation with YGC Group of Companies, Rustan's Essences, E'coudray, Caffe Puccini, Tower Records, NU 107 and 987 dzFE. Call 8919999, 8958097 or 8323878.

'Blueprint for Disaster'

WHEN tragedy strikes, we ask: how and why could it have happened? Sometimes, the smallest oversight can lead to the greatest disasters. Every Monday at 10 p.m. starting July 18, Discovery Channel investigates six global tragedies in "Blueprint for Disaster."

Tragic stories dramatized: In Seoul, all five floors of a luxury department store collapse within a matter of seconds; the seemingly unsinkable Derbyshire vanishes without a trace; one of the world's largest construction cranes buckles unexpectedly while performing a delicate operation; and inferno erupts at an Austrian ski resort; a German "bullet train" crashes while traveling at more than 200 kph, and a small fire erupts into a chaotic firestorm at an underground station in London.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 6, 2005

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Consumer prices surged 7.6% in June

By Michelle V. Remo

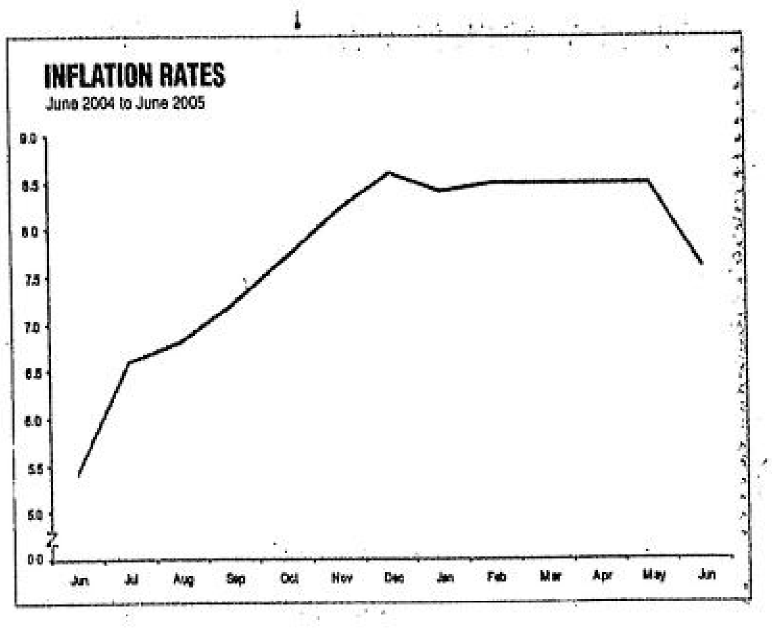
THE RATE of increase in prices of consumer goods and services slowed down to 7.6 percent in June, owing partly to the improved weather conditions that helped stabilize prices of food products, the National Statistics Office reported yesterday.

The inflation rate for June was a marked slowdown from 8.5 percent in the first five months of the year. It was, however, still way beyond the full-year target of 5 to 6 percent, which economic officials admitted was no longer attainable.

The National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) said the latest monthly inflation figure of 7.6 percent was much better than its projection of an 8-percent rise in consumer prices in June.

"El Niño was gone in June, therefore prices of food did not have much reason to post sharp increases," said Dennis Arroyo, director of Neda's policy and planning staff. He added that the inflation rate in June and in the second half of the year was expected to be lower than the year-ago level because of a high base. Inflation started breaching the 8-percent mark in the second half of 2004.

CONSUMER/ B4



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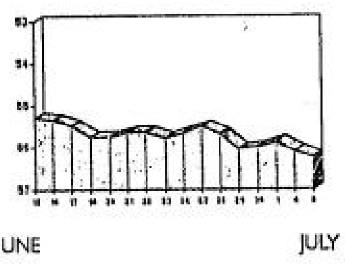

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As of 5 p.m., July 5, 2005

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per ounce Hong Kong, July 5, 2005

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Stocks end flat

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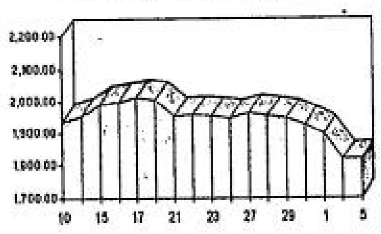


(See stock market report on Page B6)

SHARE prices closed little changed yesterday, supported by bargain-hunting after a sharp five-day downturn on political concerns sparked by allegations of vote rigging and corruption against President Macapagal-Arroyo, dealers said.

They said there was some profit-taking just before the close, which trimmed early gains, clearly reflecting that most investors remain wary of the volatile political situation.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 1.35 points to 1.817.02 after hitting a high of 1,831.49 and a low of 1,810.91. Volume was 424.54 million shares worth P2.21 billion.

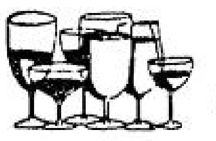
The broader all-shares index gained 4.13 points to 1,122.31.

Gainers led losers 49 to 22, with 36 stocks unchanged.

The bargain-hunting interest was "mostly because stocks have become cheap," said Mark Alan Canizares of Citiseconline.com.

Ms Arroyo is facing increasing efforts by the opposition to unseat her over alleged cheating in last year's elections. *AFP*

WHAT'S INSIDE



Customs misses 6-mo. goal /B5

US dollar keeps strength /B5

/B7

SLEX upgrade to start August

By Clarissa S. Batino

Malaysia's MTD Capital said it was ready to start the upgrade of the South Luzon Expressway next month and was just waiting for the blessings of Philippine National Construction Corp. to push through with the project.

Cost of upgrading the SLEX, according to Mark Dumol, officer-in-charge of MTD Manila Expressway Corp., was now estimated at P11 billion, 10 percent more than the original project cost.

Dumol said that by Aug. 15, Malaysia's second biggest toll operator was prepared to start civil work on the SLEX.

The upgrade will involve the widening of the Alabang-to-Sta. Rosa portion to eight lanes, the Sta. Rosa-to-Calamba section to six lanes and the Calamba-to-Sto. Tomas segment to four lanes.

"We are just waiting for the PNCC's final word," Dumol said in an interview. PNCC nullified its agreement with Hopewell Crown early this year. MTD Capital, as the new owner, appealed the decision.

PNCC president Arthur Aguilar said the

SLEX/ B2

₱56.245 TO $1

Peso slips to 6-mo. low

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO yesterday faltered to a six-month low of 56.245 against the dollar, bucking the uptrend among Asian currencies, on snowballing jitters not just over ongoing political uncertainties but the recent suspension of the expanded value-added tax (VAT) implementation.

Pressured by the sellout of local stocks on Monday, the local currency hit an intra-day high of 56.08 before closing at its intra-day low of 56.245, its weakest finish since Jan. 6 this year despite some intervention by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, currency traders said.

The volume at the spot foreign exchange market rose to $355.98 million from $333.5 million on Monday.

Although the peso was still a bit above its historic low of 56.45:$1, traders said the sentiment in the market had turned for the worse after the high tribunal froze the implementation of the VAT reform law, a key component of the government's fiscal consolidation agenda.

Traders said the passage of VAT was a key source of optimism among foreign and local investors and its suspension had rekindled worries over the government's fiscal condition.

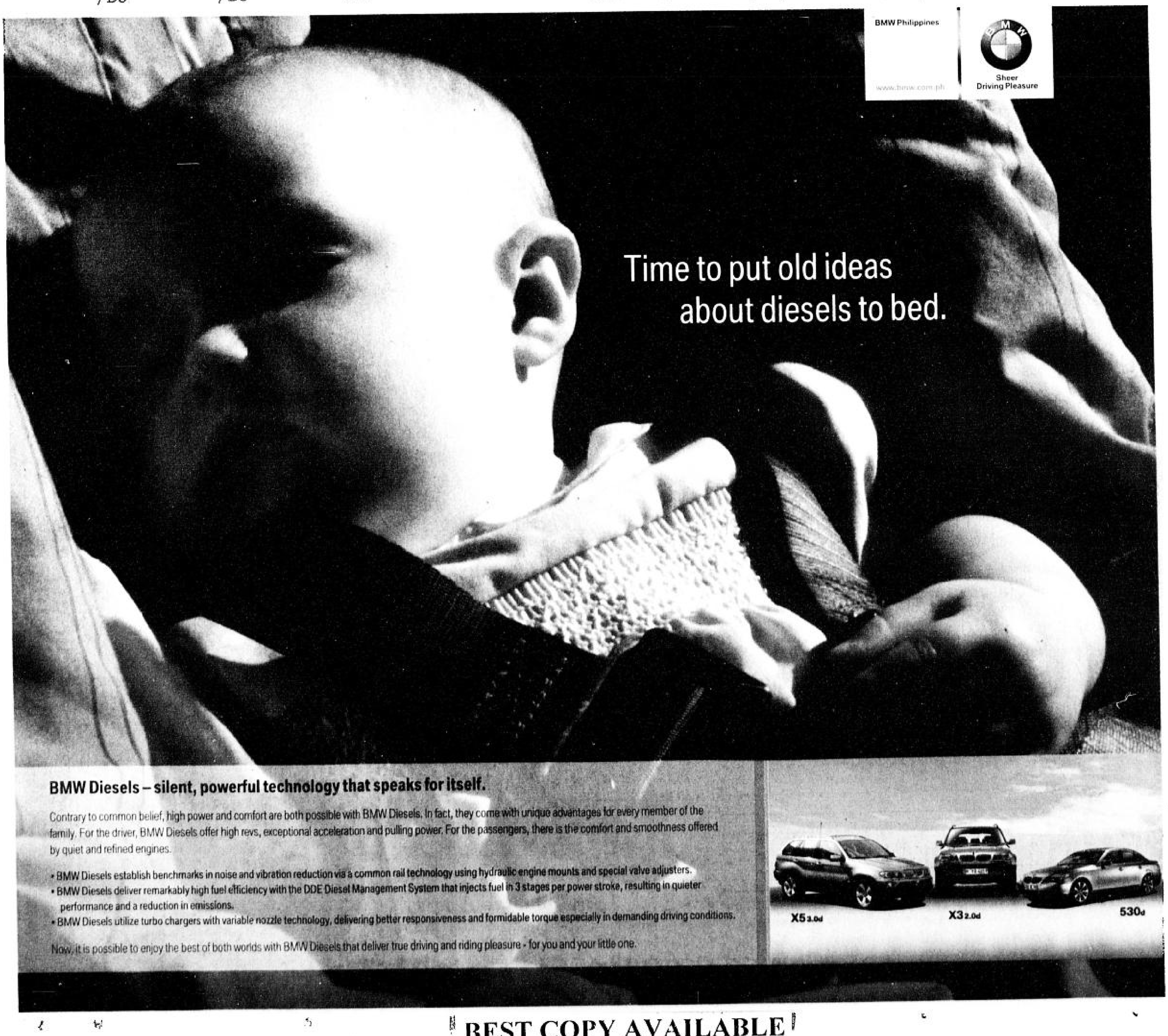
The suspension, which is estimated to cost the government P4-P5 billion a month in foregone revenues since a number of VAT exemptions would have been lifted effective July 1, is seen adding to the negative sentiment already arising from domestic political concerns.

To date, the fate of President Macapagal-Arroyo still hangs amid allegations of election fraud.

Standard & Poor's and Fitch Ratings have raised the alarm bells over the recent snag in the VAT implementation.

"By delaying much needed fiscal consolidation, this adds to the country's external vulnerability at a time when a less favorable global environment and the ongoing political crisis surrounding the President have combined to heighten risk perceptions toward the country," S&P said.

Unless resolved soon, traders warn the VAT snag could result in a foreign capital flight, which could drag the local currency to new historic lows.



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Hormel expanding RP unit

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PROCESSED meat firm Hormel Foods International Corp. is planning to expand its production capacity in the country as part of efforts to widen the export market for its hotdog, corned beef and canned meat brands.

David L. Longacre, Hormel Foods vice president for Asia-Pacific, said in an interview that Purefoods Hormel Co.—the firm's joint venture with San Miguel Corp.—was considering increasing the capacity of its factory in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

Purefoods Hormel's $40-million plant, which started operations in October 2004, can produce 160 metric tons of hotdogs daily.

This was on top of a 30-year-old plant in Marikina City, which can turn out 80 MT of hotdogs daily.

Longacre said the local demand for hotdogs had been posting double-digit growth yearly.

"The Philippines has the highest per capita consumption of hotdogs in the world, mainly because they eat it in any meal of the day."

He said that if local hotdog demand kept growing at such rates, the Cavite factory was ready to keep up with the demand as equipment could be easily added to jack up capacity to 240 MT a day.

Also, the company has already started exporting hotdogs and other meat products to countries hosting sizeable Filipino communities, such as the Middle East.

"Exports are still a small part of our business here but we are considering a lot of opportunities since the Philippines is one of our production hubs in the region," Longacre said.

"In fact, it is the biggest producer of Spam in Asia."

Hilda Tolentino, HFIC country manager for the Philippines, said the firm was developing its food service business since this was growing at about 80 percent yearly.

Tolentino said the company was expecting food service to take up about half of its total business in the future.

Tolentino added that Purefoods Hormel even tied up with fastfood chains that offered Spam in one of their breakfast meals.

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NTC proposes to keep half of fund collection

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission said it would ask Congress for authority to retain half of its annual fund collection so it could buy new equipment that would help improve its monitoring of the telecom and broadcasting sectors.

The NTC collects about P1.5 billion in fees and charges yearly. It receives an annual budget of only about P145 million.

As of end-June, the NTC had already raised about P1 billion in the form of fees and charges collected from telecom, broadcast and cable companies.

NTC Chair Ronald Solis said the budget allocation from Congress was not enough to finance the acquisition of new equipment, which were crucial to its regulatory functions.

"We want to retain at least 50 percent of our collection since our annual budget of P145 million is not enough to carry out some of the projects we intend to implement," said Solis.

The NTC is planning to purchase equipment that will allow it to monitor the performance standards of the telecom firms. Solis said these equipment were estimated to cost between $6,000 and 10,000 per piece.

"We know the carriers already have their own monitoring equipment but as the regulating agency, we must conduct our own inspection. How can we do that if we do not have our own equipment," Solis asked.

Capital raised via IPOs hit $662M in first 5 months

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

CAPITAL raised through initial public offerings and secondary offerings at the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) soared 5,038 percent to $662.8 million in the first five months of the year, from only $12.9 million in the same period last year, the World Federation of Exchanges (WFE) said in the June 2005 issue of its monthly publication called "Focus."

"This is a major rebound from the full-year results of $31.5 million in 2003 and $37.9 million in 2004. This makes our exchange at par with emerging markets," PSE president and chief executive officer Francis Lim, said in a statement.

The amount of capital generated by the Philippine stock market was, however, lower than the $885.2 million raised by Bursa Malaysia in the same period.

It was higher than the Stock Exchange of Thailand's $529.4 million and Jakarta Stock Exchange's $225.3 million.

Lim explained that the bulk of the investment flow came from the IPOs of Ayala water utility Manila Water Company (MWC) and the holding company of mall tycoon Henry Sy, SM Investments Corp., which were listed in March.

MWC raised $88.49 million while SM generated $525.11 million through their respective IPOs, accounting for 93 percent of the total investments in the stock market.

Furthermore, the WFE reported that the performance of the PSE's 30-stock composite index continued to rally and remained resilient for the period, climbing 27.7 percent as of end-May 2005 to 1,929.4 from 1,511.4 a year ago.

SLEX upgrade . . .

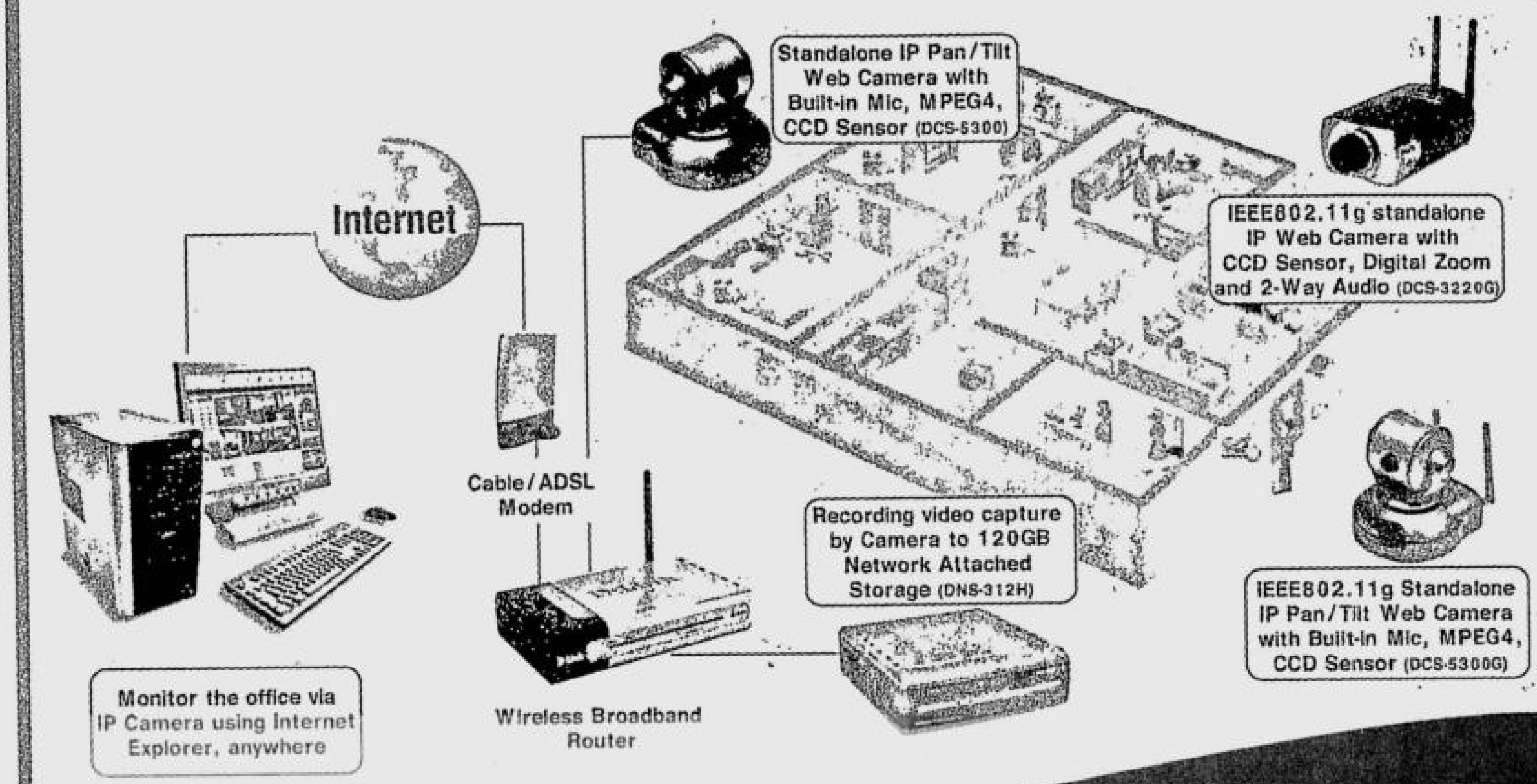
From page B1

state agency would decide within the week as to whether to accept the Malaysian firm as joint venture partner in the SLEX project.

"Our preference is for the private sector to handle infrastructure projects and that the government participates only to jumpstart it," Aguilar said.

MTD Manila Expressway Corp. is the new name of Hopewell Crown Infrastructure Inc. The Malaysian firm is working on the re-naming of the company as neither Hopewell nor Crown is part of the consortium.

Control of Hopewell Crown has changed hands three times since the original owner, Hong Kong's Hopewell Holdings Ltd. of Gordon Wu, signed an agreement in 1999 to rehabilitate and operate the SLEX.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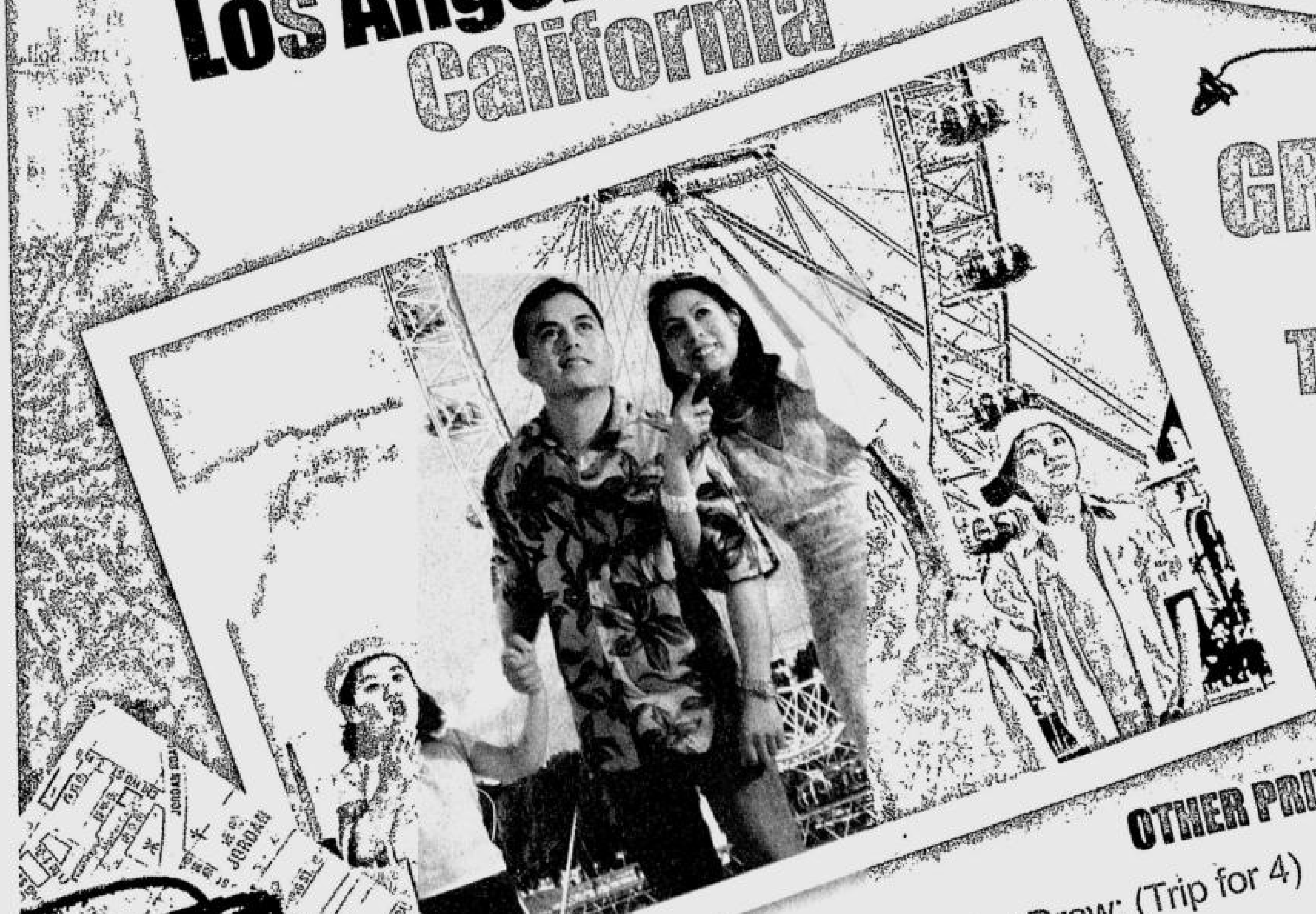

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HIGH RISK PREMIUM

Gov't rejects bids for T-bonds

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT rejected all bids for the two-year treasury bonds yesterday as the market continued to ask for high returns on government securities amid doubts whether it could still achieve its fiscal targets with the VAT law suspended.

Had the Bureau of Treasury accepted the bids for the two-year bonds, the rate could have gone up by 75 basis points to 9.625 percent compared with its rate in February. In the two-year debt instrument's auction last May, the bids were also all rejected because the Treasury found as too high the rates sought by banks.

Tenders for the two-year government securities reached P5.26 billion, or higher than the government's debt offering of P4 billion.

But National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the bids were mostly throwaway and therefore did not reflect the appetite of the market. He noted that trading for the two-year debt instrument was lackluster in the secondary market.

"We will give the market one week to digest all these developments (the temporary restraining order issued against the VAT law). Anyway by the end of this week, they will know the government's June fiscal performance," Cruz said in a briefing after yesterday's auction.

The implementation of the Expanded Value Added Tax Act of 2005, considered the administration's key measure to solve the country's fiscal problem, was suspended by the Supreme Court Friday after a petition filed by opposition lawmakers. The law sought to expand the coverage of the tax to include more items like oil and electricity, and would raise the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent next year.

The treasurer said the government's budget position likely posted another surplus in June. The positive fiscal performance should convince the credit market that the government was relatively fine amid the political noise and hurdles in the implementation of its revenue-raising measures.

He said banks are expected to react positively to the June fiscal performance of the government, and therefore result in the lowering of the interest rates they seek.

The rejection of all bids for the two-year debt instrument followed last Monday's rejection of all bids for treasury bills. The Treasury turned down bids for the short-term government securities because the market was asking for significantly higher interest rates.

Political woes continue to pressure markets

FINANCIAL markets stayed under pressure yesterday after a court ruling threw the government's fiscal reform plans into disarray and President Macapagal-Arroyo battled allegations of wrongdoing.

Ms Arroyo has vowed to finish her second term in 2010 but is facing the worst crisis of her four-year presidency as some of the professionals, business groups and Catholic Church leaders who make up her support base begin to distance themselves.

A Supreme Court ruling late on Friday, freezing an expanded sales tax pending hearings on an opposition petition, struck at the very heart of the President's plans to cut debt and poverty.

The peso and stocks, already sensitive to perceptions of rising political risk, were hit on Monday by the court ruling, with the main stock index tumbling more than 4 percent.

The stock market closed flat yesterday and the peso edged lower to 56.13 against the dollar. Traders said it was only saved from further losses by sustained dollar-buying intervention by the central bank.

"The sell-off in stocks was severe yesterday but a bounce is unlikely until we see some relief from the court," said Jojo Gonzales, managing director of Philippine Equity Partners.

"It's unclear if the court will heed the urgent plea of the government to lift the freeze."

The petition to the Supreme Court by opposition lawmakers and petrol station dealers challenges the constitutionality of part of the sales tax package but there was speculation Ms Arroyo may have leaned on the court to defuse anger over rising prices.

The court discussed yesterday the government's petition to lift the freeze and said it may hear oral arguments on July 14, earlier than the previously planned July 26. *Reuters*

Consumer

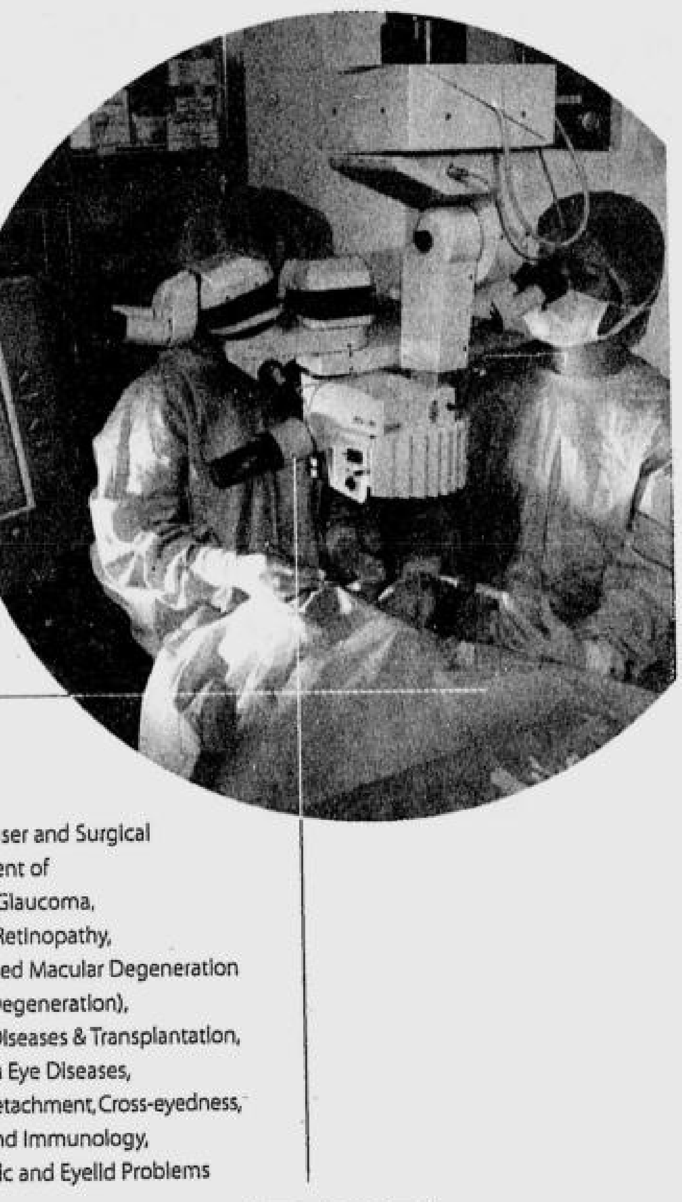
From page B1

Arroyo said, however, that there was no certainty that the inflation would be kept at its June level for the rest of the year because of lingering threats of high oil prices. He said the inflation projection of the interagency Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC), of which Neda is a member, was at 7.9 percent for the full year.

The economist said high oil prices were expected in the remaining months of the year, as China would continue having high demand for oil. China's economy, as measured by the gross domestic product, grew by 9.5 percent last year and by 9.4 percent in the first quarter of the current year.

"Besides, things are still unresolved in Iraq. We also have the summer season in the United States, which will increase chances of families going out and therefore increasing their demand for fuel. All these things are seen to put pressure on oil prices," Arroyo said in an interview.

The Neda said in a statement that the increase in consumer prices was partly attributed to higher cost of educational services, as schools raised tuition, and to the increase in the prices of selected school supplies that came along with the resumption of classes.



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(July 5, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	29.5	30	29.5	30	413,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	45.5	46	45	46	2,405,800
China Banking Corp.	770	770	770	770	50
Citystate Savings Bank	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	300
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.51	0.52	330,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	45	47	45	46	190,200
International Exch. Bank	18	18.5	18	18.5	251,700
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	27	27.5	25	25	2,377,500
Philippine National Bank	42	42	42	42	25,100
Phil. Savings Bank	32.5	32.5	32.5	32.5	3,000
Security Bank Corp.	23	23.5	23	23	308,700
Union Bank of the Phil.	27.5	28	27.5	28	17,100
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	130,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	2590	2640	2590	2640	50
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1	1	1	1	270,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1830	1830	1830	1830	300
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	5,100
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.95	0.97	0.95	0.97	4,720,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	800	805	800	805	82,220
Ipeople Inc.	3.5	3.65	3.5	3.65	211,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	700,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.4	2.55	2.4	2.48	6,630,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	20,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1535	1540	1520	1525	222,090
Ivantage Corp.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	20,000
Philweb Corp.	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.015	3,000,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. B	21	22.25	21	22	545,900
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.1	6.2	6	6.1	1,577,000
Petron Corp.	2.65	2.8	2.65	2.75	5,734,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7	7.1	7	7	956,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	100,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.48	0.51	0.48	0.5	1,610,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	2.75	2.8	2.7	2.8	5,566,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	37,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	122,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	27.5	28	26.5	26.5	270,700
RFM Corp.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	40,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	60,000
San Miguel Corp. A	58.5	59.5	58.5	59.5	145,700
San Miguel Corp. B	91.5	92	91	92	475,200
Universal Robina Corp.	16	16	16	16	41,100
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	140,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	2,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	5,000,000
Ayala Corp.	285	290	277.5	277.5	224,590
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.5	4.65	4.5	4.65	2,162,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.023	13,100,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.88	1.88	1.86	1.86	1,320,000
APC Group Inc.	0.2	0.24	0.2	0.24	30,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	20,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.45	0.48	0.45	0.47	430,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	10,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	10.5	10.25	10.5	4,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.91	0.94	0.91	0.92	17,230,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	90,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	2.18	2.36	2.18	2.24	2,773,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.06	1.06	356,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	6.4	6.6	6.3	6.3	529,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	38	39.5	38	38.5	4,208,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	50,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	500,000
House Of Investments Inc.	0.99	1	0.97	0.98	800,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.1	3.3	3.1	3.25	788,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.8	37,000
Medco Holdings	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	100,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.12	1.16	1.1	1.14	6,391,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.31	0.32	0.3	0.31	23,380,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.175	0.175	260,000
SM Investments Corp.	248	255	248	255	3,562,930
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.145	0.15	0.145	0.15	950,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.18	0.18	300,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.69	0.69	140,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	500,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1	1.04	1	1.02	3,790,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.02	1.02	740,000
Manila Jockey Club	3.15	3.15	3.1	3.1	70,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	900,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	10.25	10.5	10.25	10.25	40,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7	7.1	7	7.1	26,189,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.85	0.85	0.84	0.84	600,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.2	0.22	0.2	0.215	870,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.18	0.18	0.175	0.18	850,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	30,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.31	4,300,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.26	1.28	1.24	1.26	10,706,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	280,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	180,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	4.2	4.4	4.2	4.4	102,000
SM Development Corp.	1.34	1.44	1.34	1.44	128,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.3	7.3	7.2	7.3	8,835,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82	100,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	21,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	4.85	4.85	4.8	4.8	34,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.29	3,160,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.31	0.32	0.3	0.31	9,760,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	49,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.017	0.018	0.017	0.017	95,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.005	0.005	21,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.8	0.8	0.77	0.77	650,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.86	0.87	0.85	0.86	2,740,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	25	25	24.25	24.25	96,200
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	160,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	15,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.13	0.13	0.125	0.125	1,200,000

CURRENCIES

July 5, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.826173	1.000000	56.1770
Japan	Yen	0.007451	0.009019	0.5067
United Kingdom	Pound	1.480420	1.791900	100.6636
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.106311	0.128679	7.2288
Switzerland	Franc	0.644642	0.780275	43.8335
Canada	Dollar	0.674317	0.816193	45.8513
Singapore	Dollar	0.490368	0.593542	33.3434
Australia	Dollar	0.629034	0.761383	42.7722
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.191499	2.652590	149.0145
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.220307	0.266660	14.9802
Brunei	Dollar	0.488918	0.591786	33.2448
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000103	0.0058
Thailand	Baht	0.019990	0.024196	1.3593
UAE	Dirham	0.224944	0.272272	15.2954
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.210400	67.9966
Argentina	Peso	0.286120	0.346320	19.4552
Brazil	Real	0.350296	0.423998	23.8189
Denmark	Kroner	0.134247	0.162493	9.1284
India	Rupee	0.019014	0.023015	1.2929
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.217443	0.263193	14.7854
Mexico	New Peso	0.076889	0.093067	5.2282
New Zealand	Dollar	0.575009	0.695991	39.0987
Norway	Kroner	0.126549	0.153175	8.6049
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013881	0.016801	0.9438
South Africa	Rand	0.124143	0.150263	8.4413
Korea	Won	0.000800	0.000968	0.0544
Sweden	Kroner	0.105907	0.128190	7.2013
Syria	Pound	0.015915	0.019264	1.0822
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026112	0.031606	1.7755
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000385	0.000466	0.0262

DISCLOSURES

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. disclosed that its senior vice president, Jun Florencio, disposed of 2,000 shares on July 4, at P1,535 per share.

***

FORTUNE Cement Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on July 25, 9 a.m., at Mandarin Oriental Manila, Makati Ave., Makati City. Stockholders of record as of June 25 will be entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

***

CHINA Banking Corp. disclosed that AVP Jose Leslie Javier disposed of 60 shares on June 29.

***

HOLCIM Philippines Inc. elected Atsushi Kato to replace Tomoyuki Katsura, who resigned as director on July 1.

***

METRO Alliance Holdings and Equities Corp. moved its annual stockholders' meeting from July 29 to Sept. 9. It will be held at 2 p.m., at Top of the Citi, 34th Floor, Citibank Tower, 8741 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City. The record date was also moved from June 29 to July 31. *Compiled by Cyril L. Bonabente, PDI Research*

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COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

A TEAM of ex-PCIBankers who have gone through the financial reports of Equitable Bank since the latter's acquisition of PCIBank in 1999 came up with a startling finding: Not only was the 10-percent "treasury" shares now lodged with subsidiary EBC Investments acquired through bank funds, but Equitable's acquisition of PCIBank had been financed all along by bank, and not shareholders', money.

If the results of the forensic accounting are indeed correct, then the Go family has achieved what their board nominee Andres Soriano III failed to do when he was still the ruling minority shareholder in San Miguel Corp.—borrow corporate funds to gain majority control of San Miguel through the aborted Neptunia deal.

As if to compound its woes, Equitable PCIBank has been ordered by the Bangko Sentral to formally explain why in May the bank paid dividends to EBC Investments for the 10-percent block, when those shares have all along been classified as "treasury" shares.

The regulatory rebuke was issued along with an order to EBC Investments "to sell such shares immediately" and, along with the parent Equitable PCIBank, address the expected P3.4-billion capital impairment should that 10-percent block be made to reflect current market value.

Equitable PCIBank is scheduled to hold a stockholders' meeting on July 19, and both the Social Security System and the Government Service Insurance System, who together own 38 percent of the merged banks, claim the Gos, at 25 percent, are set to appropriate for themselves the 10-percent "treasury" block to bolster their tenuous hold.

For the Go family, what they should watch out for is when former Equitable PCIBank chair George Go comes out and corroborates the findings of the PCIBankers forensic team.

If the grapevine is correct, that scenario will happen sooner than later.

In-Audi-ble

AFTER nearly two months wait, Dimsun N' Dumplings owner Andrew Masigan was told he would finally get by today the license plates for the new Audi A4 Quattro he had acquired from disenfranchised dealer, Auto Prominence.

(Despite the Germans firing Auto Prominence, the latter claims it continues to be the exclusive Audi distributor/dealer by virtue of a Pangasinan court order.)

An Auto Prominence spokesperson, reacting to a Monday item here, virtually blamed Masigan for the delay, saying the businessman had wanted a particular number ending for the license plates.

Also contrary to Cocktales' report, the Quattro would not have been released from Customs had the proper import duties remained unpaid, Auto Prominence added

Meanwhile, Audi lawyer Jose Bernas warned that Audi has not released for local sale the new Audi A6 3.2 FSI being sold by Auto Prominence because of non-compatibility with the local gasoline, which could give rise to what the lawyer euphemistically referred to as "maintenance issues."

According to Bernas, Auto Prominence imported the A6 3.2 FSI-engine model from a Taiwan dealer, and not from Audi itself.

Money-go-round

- RACER turned painter/flamenco dancer Ricardo Silverio Jr. is suing his father, Ricardo Sr., and his wife, Bulacan Rep. Lorna Silverio, for control of the family's insurance business, Centennial Guarantee Assurance Corp., and about P40 million in investment placements.

  The Bulacan congresswoman, however, denies ever "dipping [her] fingers into the internal affairs" of Centennial, despite her being a director of the company.
- A TEAM from Ritz-Carlton Doha is in town to hire staff for its hotel in Qatar.

Heard through the grapevine

PLDT and Dream are holding advanced talks, which would likely result in former chair Antonio Cojuangco Jr. folding in his under-performing Dream satellite venture into PLDT's planned satellite TV business.

PLDT wants Dream's franchise for its satellite TV venture, while Cojuangco wants more cash.

Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Customs misses 6-mo. goal

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU of Customs said yesterday it has collected P68.085 billion in revenues during the first half the year.

The collection was 6 percent short of the P72.507-billion target for the period, but 12 percent more than the P60.568 billion collected during the same period last year.

The BOC is the government's second-biggest revenue contributor, next to the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Bureau of Customs Commissioner Alberto Lina attributed the increase in the BOC's revenue collection to revenue-raising and anti-smuggling measures.

The BOC recently launched the Run After the Smugglers (RATS) program, under which the customs bureau would regularly file charges against suspected smugglers to put teeth into the government's anti-smuggling efforts.

Lina also cited the technological enhancements in the agency, as well as streamlining of processes in the payment of duties.

The BOC's efforts to raise more revenues, however, fell short of the target for the period, due partly to the slight decrease in imports during the first four months of the year.

Latest data from the National Statistics Officer showed that imports for the January-to-April period went down one percent to $13.076 billion from $13.206 billion during the same period a year ago.

The government is counting on the BOC and the BIR to meet their collection targets, to close the budget gap.

But despite the below-target performance, the Department of Finance has projected that the budget position of the national government exceeded the target of P98.5 billion for the first half.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the deficit for the first half was estimated to be about P29 billion lower than the target, and that it could have even recorded a surplus in June.

The national government's fiscal position for the first half would be announced within the week, Cruz said.

The projected surplus in June would be the second for the year. Last April, the government posted a P3.3-billion surplus.

With the positive fiscal performance, the DOF believes the government would end the year with a deficit below the P180-billion ceiling.

Transco fast-tracks ₱5.7B worth of projects in Mindanao

By Abigail L. Ho

THE NATIONAL Transmission Corp. is accelerating the completion of P5.7 billion worth of transmission lines and substations in Mindanao to prevent a power crisis in the area.

Transco president and chief executive Alan Ortiz said the state firm was working doubly hard to complete 23 transmission line and substation projects to meet the growing demand for power in Mindanao.

Ortiz said in a statement yesterday that Transco was working on seven substation capacity-addition projects worth P330 million in Iligan City, Zamboanga del Sur, Misamis Oriental, Surigao and Davao.

The projects are expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Over the last four years, Mindanao's peak demand has been growing at an average of 5.8 percent a year.

Demand for power delivery services, on the other hand, has increased almost 8.9 percent from 2003 to 2004.

Transco, through its Mindanao Transmission Augmentation Project (Minta), aims to cover this increasing demand over the next few years.

Projects under Minta include the installation of a microprocessor-based substation control equipment at the Aurora substation in Zamboanga del Sur.

Upon completion in September, this will automate an array of activities and procedures in the substation, resulting in, among others, faster response during times of emergency.

Transco has also started pre-construction activities on 16 transmission line and substation addition and capacity expansion projects.

Among these are the 240-circuit-kilometer (ckm) Abaga-Kirahon line, the 216-ckm Kirahon-Maramag line and the 204-ckm Maramag-Bunawan line, all rated 230-kilovolts (kV).

Once completed, these new lines will provide the additional electricity transmission highway to deliver power coming from the Agus hydroelectric facility in northern Mindanao to high-growth areas Davao and General Santos in southern Mindanao.

Construction of new 138-kV lines are also in the works. These include the 202-ckm General Santos-Tacurong line and the 68-ckm Sangali-Pitogo line in Zamboanga City.

LPI seeks license to sell plans

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PRE-NEED firm Pacific Plans Inc. is asking the Securities and Exchange Commission for a license that will allow 15,000 agents of its subsidiary, Lifetime Plans Inc., to continue selling education plans, PPI president Ernesto Garcia told the INQUIRER.

PPI stopped selling open-ended or traditional plans since 1992 but it had continued paying obligations to planholders. Early this year, the SEC revoked the certificate of incorporation of PPI's subsidiary, Lifetime, for its alleged failure to meet capital requirements, which should reflect its ability to continue operating. In effect, both pre-need companies have no authority to sell education plans.

"Lifetime is in limbo after the SEC revoked its certificate. They quashed our motion for reconsideration as well. Now, we are seeking a license that will allow Lifetime agents to continue selling," Garcia said.

Garcia also said that should the SEC ask PPI to formally apply for a new license, PPI would be willing to comply with the requirements.

Sources said the SEC was studying the options in resolving the issue of PPI's and Lifetime's permits and one of these options was to ask PPI to apply for a new license.

In a Senate hearing last week, Lifetime agents said they were left with companies that had no dealers' licenses.

The SEC earlier rejected a petition by Lifetime seeking the reversal of a ruling that revoked the company's license to operate. The SEC said it denied Lifetime's motion for reconsideration due to lack of merit.

Lifetime spokesperson Samuel V. Torres said in a separate statement that the pre-need firm would appeal the ruling.

LPI will also work closely with PPI in exhausting all legal and administrative remedies that will ensure that no Lifetime employee or sales agents will be displaced.

"While we did not expect the SEC to reverse itself, we believe we have strong legal grounds against the revocation order," Torres said.

Torres also assured beneficiaries that they would continue receiving their benefits and asked the rest of Lifetime's 400,000 planholders to continue paying their premiums.

In a five-page resolution , the SEC said it saw no valid reason to reverse its previous ruling revoking the certificate of registration of Lifetime.

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  "What should we practice: uniform or customized discounts for our customers?"
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  "In native handbag exporting, how do we compute our price to be competitive in the international market?" CASE STUDY
  "Should our premium brand lower price to answer the threat of low-price competitors?
  "How do we compete against cheap parallel imports?" CASE STUDY
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NED ROBERTO, PhD is one of Asia's leading authorities on marketing. He is a much sought after consultant, speaker, author, and educator. He has taught at De La Salle University in Manila, Northwestern University in Chicago and INSEAD in France. He was professor of International Marketing at the Asian Institute of Management for 29 years. In 1983, he received the Philippine Marketing Association's Agora Award for Marketing Education, and in 2004, he was awarded the 1st Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association of Marketing Educators

Dr. Roberto has consulted and conducted in-house seminars for Fortune 500 companies in the U.S., Europe, and Asia such as Procter & Gamble, Citibank, McCann-Erickson, Nestle, AC Nielsen, etc. He is the author (with Philip Kotler) of Social Marketing, which has been translated into seven languages, as well as the best-selling User-Friendly Marketing Research and several other books and countless papers on marketing.

Dr. Roberto earned his MBA and PhD in Marketing at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Business.

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ASIAN MARKETS MIXED

Tokyo retailers shine; US dollar keeps strength

SINGAPORE—Most Asian share markets fell on Tuesday as the dollar hovered near a 13-month high against the euro, but Japanese retailers such as Seiyu Ltd. rose on news it could become a subsidiary of US giant Wal-Mart.

European shares were set to mark time near 3-year highs on Tuesday, with exporters and energy firms in focus due to the weak euro and US light crude eyeing a return to $60 a barrel.

US oil prices climbed past $59 a barrel, tacking more gains onto a short-covering rally that preceded the long Independence Day holiday weekend in the United States.

The dollar retained its strength as the market stayed focused on its widening interest rate advantage over its rivals after the Federal Reserve raised its rate last week to 3.25 percent.

"There's been a lot of talk in the market about a rate cut by the ECB, and if this does happen, euro will be pushed lower," said Kikuko Takeda, currency analyst at Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi.

The euro was trading around $1.1900 yesterday afternoon, after it fell as far as $1.1889 on Monday, its lowest level since late May 2004.

The dollar bought 111.80 yen little changed on the day but near an 11-month high.

Sterling traded at $1.7580 after touching a 13-month low of $1.7569 on Monday, as the market shunned the pound on expectations the Bank of England will lower interest rates in the near future.

Spot gold fell to a three-week low on Tuesday before rebounding as fresh physical demand emerged to help bullion resist a stronger US dollar.

It was quoted at $426.50/$427 an ounce by 0606 GMT, down from $427.30/$428 an ounce last traded in London on Monday, but above a three-week low at $425.60 hit in early Asian trading.

Some Asian currencies were under pressure too. The Taiwan dollar hit a six-month low and the Korean won fell to its lowest close since Jan. 6. The Singapore dollar fell to its weakest in nine months.

The MSCI Index of Asian stocks except Japan was down 0.44 percent.

Tokyo's Nikkei share average closed down 0.3 percent, retreating after a five-day rally as investors cashed in on some exporters such as Nissan Motor Co.

Nissan, Japan's second-biggest auto maker, fell 0.9 percent after hitting its highest closing in almost three months on Monday as a rise in the dollar versus the yen fueled hopes for higher earnings.

Honda Motor Co. lost 0.55 percent while Toyota was up 0.5 percent.

Top Asian retailer Aeon Co. Ltd. jumped 2.5 percent to 1,796 yen a day after the company said its quarterly operating profit rose 24.5 percent.

Investors also bought Seiyu, the Japanese affiliate of Wal-Mart Stores Inc., after a newspaper said that Seiyu would become a subsidiary of the US giant this year.

"Seiyu is a big topic for the market today, so that's helping to draw attention to retailers," said Toshihiko Matsuno, assistant general manager of investment research at SMBC Friend Securities. "Whether Wal-Mart's business style can succeed in Japan is another story altogether ...," he added.

Seiyu, the most active issue by value, rose 6 percent.

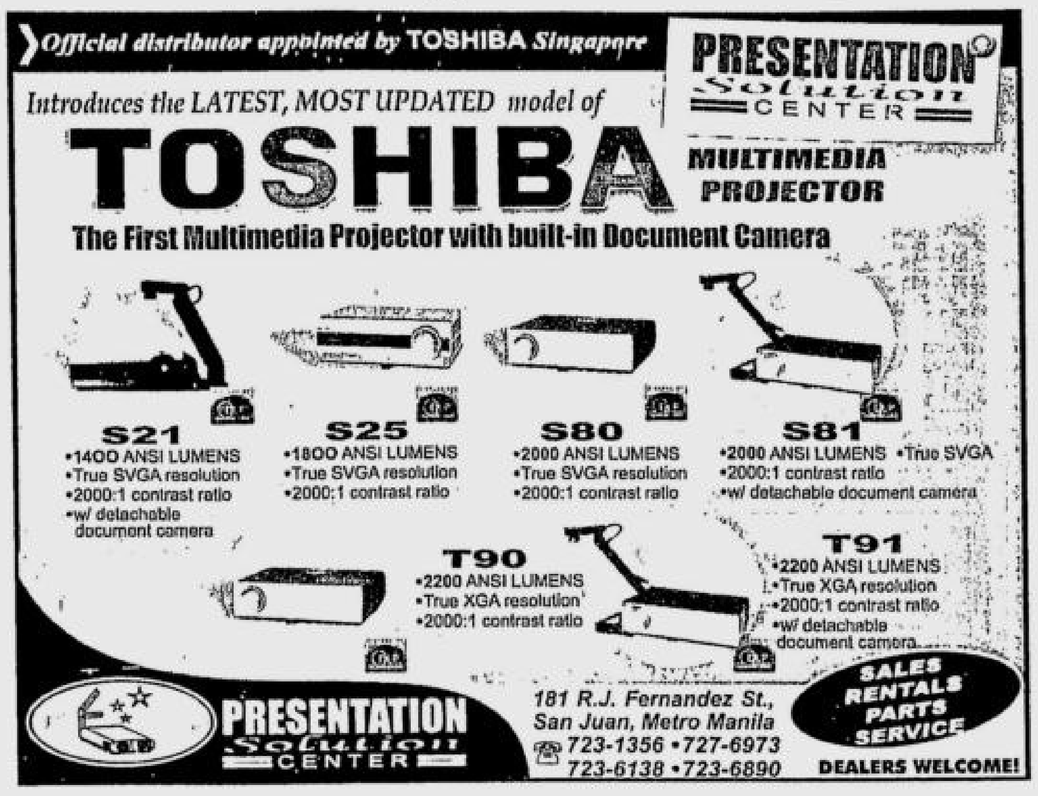
Wal-Mart and Seiyu said no decision had been made.

Seoul stocks reached their highest level in five-and-a-half years on Tuesday, helped by positive service sector data and a weaker won that bolstered auto makers.

But the benchmark Korea Composite Stock Price Index (Kospi) was unable to hold the gains and closed 0.28 percent lower.

Hong Kong stocks fell more than a third of a percent, with property shares such as Sun Hung Kai Properties hurt by a larger-than-expected rate hike by the city's biggest banks.

Taiwan stocks closed down 0.62 percent, weighed down by losses in tech shares, while Singapore shares were up 0.34 percent. *Reuters*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S. Korea cuts 2005 growth forecast

SEOUL—South Korea's central bank on Tuesday lowered its economic growth forecast for this year to 3.8 percent from 4 percent, saying record high oil price were slowing an overall economic recovery.

The downward revision followed weaker-than-expected growth in the first half, with private consumption recovering slowly and facility and construction investment suffering a relapse.

"Hit hard by high oil prices, the economy was still crawling well into the first half," the Bank of Korea said in an economic outlook report.

In its earlier forecast in December, the bank said the economy would grow 4 percent for 2005.

On Tuesday, it cut its first-half gross domestic product (GDP) growth estimate to 3 percent from the previous 3.4 percent projected late last year.

GDP growth was estimated at 2.7 percent in the first quarter and 3.2 percent in the second.

Despite the weaker-than-expected first half, the central bank maintained its optimistic forecast for the second half, raising its growth forecast to 4.5 percent from 4.4 percent.

"Private consumption, public sector investment and stable forex (markets) will likely offset high oil prices, helping bring about a solid recovery in the second half, with fourth quarter (growth) seen up at the high end of 4 percent," the bank said.

It forecast private consumption growth would accelerate from 1.9 percent in the first half to 3.5 percent in the second, giving a full-year outcome of 2.7 percent, higher than the bank's previous forecast of 1.8 percent. *AFP*

China's economy slowing, exec says

BEIJING—China's economy is probably cooling, easing speculation about a yuan revaluation and making it easier for Beijing to launch long-waited currency reforms, a central bank adviser was quoted on Tuesday as saying.

A slowing economy would keep speculators guessing and discourage them from betting on a revaluation, therefore removing an obstacle to reform, said Yu Yongding, an influential government economist and a member of the central bank's monetary policy committee.

Economic growth was strong in the first half, but weakening corporate profits and falling inflation in recent months pointed to a slowdown.

"It's possible that a turning point has occurred following a boom cycle of the economy that began in late 2002," Yu told the Financial News in an interview.

"I think although the economic situation may have undergone or is undergoing important changes, monetary policy should stay stable in the near term.

"There is no need to raise benchmark interest rates."

The central bank has kept interest rates generally stable in recent years, although the People's Bank of China raised its benchmark interest rates for the first time in nearly a decade in October.

Analysts say restricted bank lending aimed at slowing targeted parts of the economy actually meant policy was tight.

China's economy in the first-half of 2005 grew 9.5 percent from a year earlier, boosted by net exports, while inflation in the first six months was just 1.8 percent, providing an optimal match, Yu said.

First-quarter gross domestic product grew a robust 9.4 percent from a year earlier, official data shows, while May consumer prices were just 1.8 percent higher than a year earlier, equaling April's inflation, itself the lowest in a year and half.

China's trade surplus in the first five months of 2005 was $30 billion, close to a $32 billion surplus for the whole of 2004, fueling foreign criticism the yuan's peg of 8.28 to the dollar is too low and makes Chinese exports unfairly cheap.

The government is expected to publish first-half economic indicators later this month.

Chinese officials have said the government would not start reforming the currency while speculation over revaluation is running at fever pitch.

But falling inflation and the prospects of an economic slowdown help create a better environment for reforming the exchange rate by discouraging speculation, Yu said.

Falling inflation would help depress market interest rates and boost commercial banks' demand for the central bank's bills used to mop up capital inflows to check money supply, he said.

A growing trade surplus could fuel pressure on the yuan to rise, but slower economic growth would cut the chance of a revaluation. *Reuters*

Honda unveils new hybrid system

TOKYO—Honda Motor unveiled improvements to its flagship Civic's gasoline and hybrid engine systems on Tuesday that would boost mileage and performance on the car's remodeled versions due later this year.

With global sales of nearly 600,000 units a year, the Civic is Honda's best-selling model after the Accord, and the refreshed version is widely expected to generate big sales gains for Japan's third-biggest auto maker.

Honda said the improved i-VTEC (intelligent Variable Valve Timing and Lift Electronic Control System) technology—a mechanism that helps engines burn fuel more efficiently while enhancing driving performance—would raise the engine's fuel economy by 6 percent in the new gasoline-only Civic.

The new 1.8-liter engine is 5 kg (11 lbs) lighter than the 1.7-liter engine that powers the current Civic, thanks largely to the use of fewer components—something Honda has promised to pursue to lower costs.

Honda also developed a more powerful, fuel-efficient hybrid system that would enable its gasoline-electric vehicles to run solely on the electric motor at low cruising speeds for the first time, like Toyota Motor's popular Prius sedan.

JAPAN'S auto giant Honda Motor senior managing director Motoatsu Shiraishi displays a cut model of the new hybrid engine system. AFP

The new system features an evolved, three-stage 1.34-liter i-VTEC engine, combined with Honda's IMA (integrated motor assist) technology to achieve a 20 percent jump in output—comparable to the performance of a conventional 1.8-liter engine.

The system is smaller, lighter and costs up to 30 percent less than the existing version, a Honda engineer said.

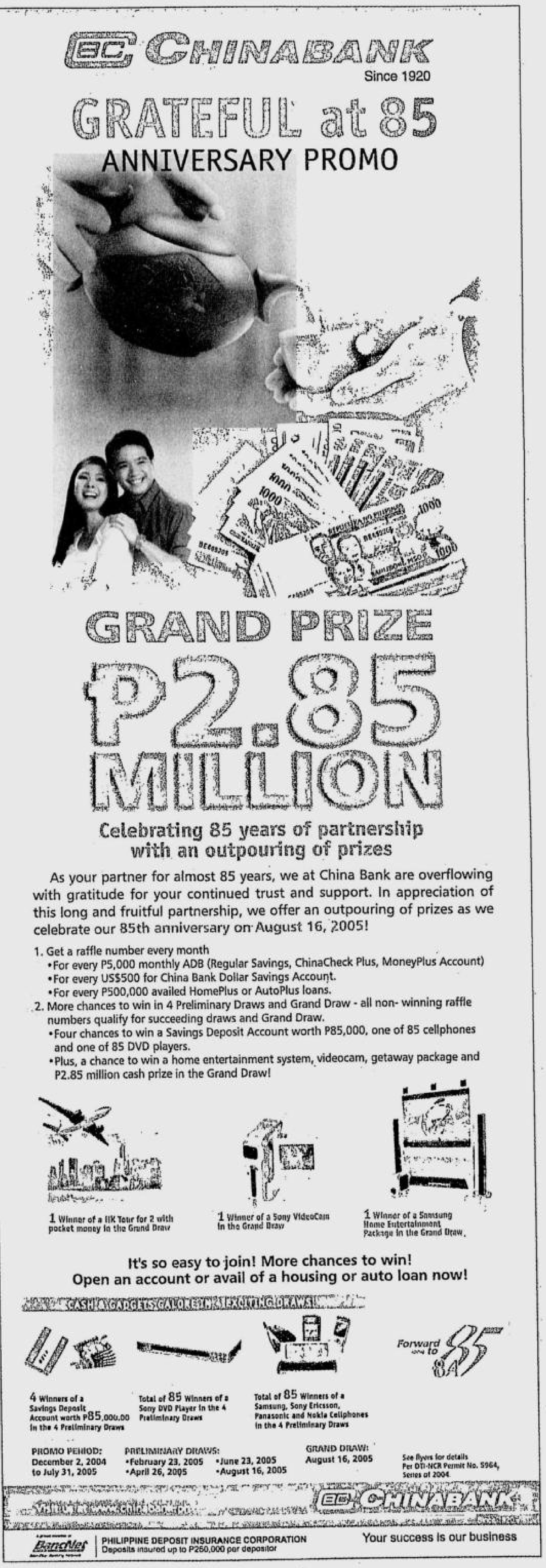
Honda has long been at the forefront of "green" powertrain technology, perhaps most famously with the development in 1973 of the CVCC (Compound Vortex Controlled Combustion) engine—the world's first to meet US Clean Air Act requirements without a catalytic converter, and which gave the popular Civic its name.

Honda is one of a handful of car makers to offer mass-market hybrid cars; its FCX model is the only zero-emission fuel-cell vehicle certified by the US Environmental Protection Agency and California regulators for regular daily use.

But Honda's ranking as one of the world's most fuel-efficient car brands is mainly due to its widespread use of environmentally friendly gasoline-engine technology, and that trend will continue despite the development of an improved hybrid system, an executive said.

Despite the popularity of its fuel-sipping Prius hybrid, Toyota ranks third behind Honda and Nissan Motor in average fleet-wide fuel economy in the United States, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists, a Washington, D.C.-based independent research group.

"In terms of the technology that Honda and Toyota have, I would argue that they're running neck-and-neck," said David Friedman, research director of the group's Clean Vehicles Program. *Reuters*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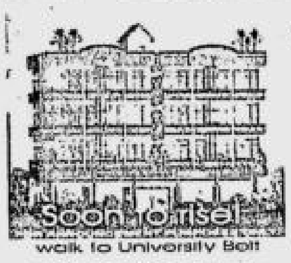

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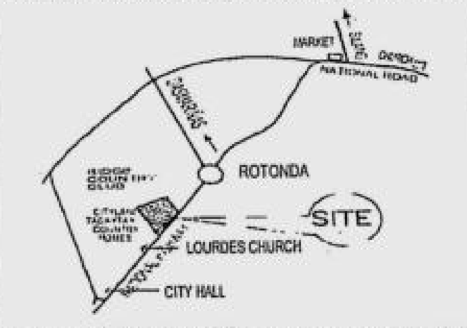

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*Fees for bid documents per Legend Mark:
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Pre-bid Conference Date and Time : 15 July 2005 at 2:00 P.M.
Bidding Date and Time : 27 July 2005, not later than 10:00 A.M.
Place : Room MR2A, 2nd Floor, 5-storey Building, BSP Main Complex, Malate, Manila

Interested bidders shall submit not later than the bidding date and time the following documents in three (3) separate envelopes:

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2. Y2004 Audited Financial Statements (Income Statement & Balance Sheet).
3. (a) Y2004 Income Tax Returns duly stamped/received by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) or its Authorized Agent Bank.
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4. Valid and current Mayor's Permit/Municipal License.
5. Prospective bidder's computation for its Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) which shall be at least equal to the ABC, duly signed by the authorized signing official and supported with pertinent documents, i.e., financial statements and copies of on-going project contracts; or a commitment from a licensed bank to extend to it a credit line if awarded the contract to be bid; or a certification from the bank stating that the bidder has a cash deposit with a holding period of at least one (1) month from date of bidding. The commitment or deposit certificate shall be in an amount not lower than 10% of the ABC. The NFCC shall be computed as follows: NFCC = [(Current Assets.– Current Liabilities)(K)] minus value of all outstanding projects: K = 10.
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10. Copies of at least three (3) contracts for similar requirements

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Chairman

(PDI-July 6, 2005)

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AUCTION SALE

NATION Pawnshop, Inc. Pob. Meyc. Bulacan will auction unredeemed pledges of JAN. '05 on JULY 25, '05 10am - *Lanuza & Sons*
(PDI JULY 6, 2005)

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE ESTATE OF THE LATE ERNESTO A. SORIANO HAS BEEN EXTRA JUDICIALLY SETTLED BY HIS HEIRS ON JUNE 24, 2005, BEFORE NOTARY PUBLIC RYAN ESPINOSA. PER DOC. NO. 358 PAGE 72 BOOK VII SERIES OF 2005 (PDI JUNE 29, JULY 6 & 13 2005)

NOTICE is hereby given that the estate of the late ATTY. JOSE G. GONZALES has been extrajudicially settled with waiver among his heirs per Doc No. 117, Page No. 24, Book No. VII, Series of 2005, before Atty. Juanito L. Garcia, Notary Public Manila. (PDI - July 6, 13 & 20, 2005)

Notice is hereby given of the extrajudicial settlement of estate of the late GREGORIA APOLINARIO by her legal heirs with waiver as per Doc. No. 193; Page No. 40; Book No. 579; Series of 2005 before Notary Public Cecilio C. Casalla of Pasay City (PDI-June 22, 29 & July 6, 2005)

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

Alabang Country Club Cert.# A -1917 Issued to Bernardo B. Trinidad was lost. If no contest received new Certificate will be issued. (PDI- July 1, 6, 13, 2005)

LOSS of Ayala Corp. Stck Cert. #4415 for 18,439 shares issued to ANTONIO MA. GUERRERO & /or CONSUELO S. GUERRERO. (PDI - June 29, July 6 & 13, 2005)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MALE/FEMALE

9 New Positions SEC., SCHL TCHR I, BSE w/ LET or PBET, PRC Lic., Sta. Lucia H.S. Div. Pasig City & San Juan

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INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Attention: NETWORKERS! New MLM Co.,1 month old Be a Pioneer!0926-7009105

NEED SIDELINE? P/F up to P20K/mo. 3762642 to 43

EARN P32T/day 09283214829

QC Carshop 500m² 8974697 35T

RTW CONSIGN 3738821

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF JUNK ITEMS

"AS IS, WHERE IS" BASIS

DATE OF BIDDING: July 21, 2005, 2:00 PM, Solarium Hall, Bldg-I Grd. Floor, NPC-HO, Agham Road corner Quezon Ave., Diliman, Quezon City

The National Power Corporation will conduct public bidding of the following scrap and junk items located at various NPC stations.

SCHEDULE - I

	Item Description and Location	Minimum Bid Price
1.	One (1) lot of unserviceable and junk power cable located at Mak-Ban GTPP, Bo. Bilin, Bay, Laguna	P 3,132,000.00
2.	One (1) Amian Pipeline located at Amian, Negros Oriental	P 70,400.00
3.	One (1) lot scrap metals consisting of junk diesel engine parts located Bongao and Siasi Diesel Power Plants Note : Bidding for this item shall be conducted simultaneously at NPC Diliman, Q.C. and NPC-SPUG, Zamboanga City	P 42,000.00

SCHEDULE - II

1.	Barite, 8,010 bags, 100 lbs per bag located at Tiwi Geothermal Power Plant, Tiwi, Albay	P 502,627.50

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S / CASHIER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE OFFER.
2. LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN (2004 ORIGINAL OR XEROX COPY) OF THE BIDDER AND TAX CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE AND ONE (1) COPY OF VALID IDENTIFICATION CARD LIKE DRIVER'S LICENSE, GSIS ID, SSS ID, POSTAL ID, PASSPORT, PRC ID AND COMPANY ID.

Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding may secure the bid form at P500.00/set from Mr. S.V. Lomuntad, Jr., OIC, Warehousing Inventory, Traffic and Asset Disposal Division (WITADD) at Bldg. 1, Ground Floor, NPC Head Office, Corner Agham Road and Quezon Ave., Diliman, Q.C. or call telephone no. 922-8431. For Mindanao bidders, bid form is available at NPC, SPUG Mindanao Office, Sto. Niño Drive, Putik Road, Tomaga, Zamboanga City. c/o Mr. Ahmad H. Aisree, Manager, SPUG-Mindanao. Deadline for Issuance of bid form is 4:30 PM July 20, 2005.

For the Materials Management Department
(Sgd.) FELIX B. TACATA, JR.
OIC, MMD

(PDI – July 4, 5 & 6, 2005)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

PLEASE BE INFORMED THAT ORIENTAL ASSURANCE CORPORATION HAS TERMINATED ITS MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT AND PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE POLICY ISSUED TO PLATINUM ACCESS CARD EFFECTIVE APRIL 21, 2005.

IN THIS REGARD, ORIENTAL ASSURANCE CORPORATION ASSUMES NO LIABILITY WHATSOEVER FOR ANY TRANSACTIONS ENTERED INTO BY PLATINUM ACCESS CARD USING OR INVOLVING ORIENTAL ASSURANCE CORPORATION AS ITS INSURANCE PROVIDER.

THE MANAGEMENT
ORIENTAL ASSURANCE CORPORATION

(PDI-July 6, 2005)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATIONS
LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE
East Avenue, Quezon City
E-mail Address: ltombox@lot.gov.ph • Website: www.lto.gov.ph

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Please be informed that the following are the only valid Commemorative Plates as of July 1, 2005:

		Valid up to
01.	Department of Transportation and Communications 25th Anniversary	July 23, 2005
02.	Professional Regulation Commission 31st Foundation Anniversary	July 31, 2005
03.	PMI Colleges 100th Anniversary	August 31, 2005
04.	President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo Inaugural	August 31, 2005
05.	Philippine Merchant Marine Academy 185th Foundation Anniversary	Sept. 14, 2005
06.	Cavite Naval Hospital 50th Founding Anniversary	Sept. 14, 2005
07.	Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Paul Charters (SPC) 100 years of service in the Philippines	Dec. 31, 2005
08.	Feminist Movement in the Philippines 50th Anniversary	Dec. 31, 2005
09.	U.P. College of Medicine 100th Anniversary	Dec. 31, 2006

Motor vehicles sporting expored commemorative plates will be apprehended by Law Enforcement Agencies.

(Sgd.) ANNELI R. LONTOC
Assistant Secretary

(PDI – July 6, 2005)

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PNOC

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Philippines MCPO Box 2102 Tel. No. 893-6001/1320

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

DE-SCALING OF THE 30"-DIAMETER MAIN RE-INJECTION LINE OF MG-A USING HIGH-PRESSURE WATER CLEANING ROTO-FAN
EDC 05-101

The Approved Budget is **P 3,490,420.00** chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is 10 calendar days.

Application Forms for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o M.C. Barile) starting **July 28, 2005** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: **Five Hundred (Php500.00).**

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **July 5, 2005, 10:00 a.m.** at the BAC Conference Room, 1st Flr., Bldg. 5, Energy Center, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila.

Applications for Eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at PNOC-EDC, 1st First Floor Bldg. 5, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila, **not later than 2:00 p.m. on July 19, 2005** and shall be opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to abort the bidding process, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

BAC CHAIRMAN

(PDI--July 6, 2005)

Notice of Loss

This is to inform the public that Marcel Trading Corporation, owner of several shares of stocks of Philippine Bio-Industries, Inc. declared the following stock certificates are lost:

Stock Certificate No.	No. of Shares
2	104, 998
9	234, 000
11	81, 000
13	75, 838
15	24, 162

All reasonable efforts were undertaken by the present management of Marcel Trading Corporation, but to no avail. If no contest received, new certificate will be issued.

The Management
Marcel Trading Corporation

(PDI--June 22, 29 & July 6, 2005)

Send your resumé instantly.

JOB Market
www.jobmarketonline.com

WANTED FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING

SALES REPRESENTATIVES

- M/F 20-40 years old
- College graduate
- Preferably with Engineering background
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Highly motivated and goal oriented
- Knowledgeable in the basic components, functions and usage of heat exchangers

We offer above industry compensation and commission package.
Interested applicants may apply in person or send their comprehensive resumé with 2x2 photo to:

PHIL. THERMAL EXCHANGERS INC.
69 Villegas Street, Baybayin, Los Baños, Laguna
E-mail: philthermal@digitelone.com
Tel.#(02) 520-8360; (049) 827-6151; (049) 827-0136

Centennial Bank relaunches housing, auto loans

CENTENNIAL Savings Bank recently relaunched its Auto Advantage and Housing Advantage Loan products on top of its other loan services such as the All-Purpose Advantage Loan, business loans and loans against deposit hold-out.

Buying cars come in as easy and quick with the bank's Auto Advantage Loan. The car loan covers acquisition of either brand new or second hand Asian Utility Vehicles (AUV) or Light Commercial Vehicles (LCV). For a minimum down payment of only 20 percent, the loan shall be paid for a maximum term of 60 months with interest. Rebates will be given if the loan is paid on or before the due date.

Dreaming of owning a house and lot is now a reality with the bank's Housing Advantage Loan. This covers acquisition of lot, house and lot, condominium, townhouse or rowhouse; home improvement; construction of a residential unit on a lot owned by the loan borrower; and refinancing or take-out of existing housing loans. The terms of payment, minimum and maximum loanable amount will vary depending on the purpose of the loan subject to 12-percent interest rate per annum.

Other bank products and services are regular savings account which includes Kid Matipid Savings with 4 percent interest per annum; Cybercash current account with 2.5 percent interest per annum. This comes with a combo account facility, time deposits and ATM savings which can also go with any regular savings and current account. Bayad Center and fund transfer facilities are also available. Soon to be launched are the CSB Educational Advantage and Jewelry Advantage loans.

Centennial Bank will also be installing new ATM machines for its customers. The bank opened its services to the public on Feb. 18, 1998. It is owned by two solid financial institutions, namely, AFP Savings and Loan Association Inc. and AFP Mutual Benefit Association Inc. It has five branches: Main Branch at its Head Office at Prestige Tower, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City; Murphy Branch at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City; Villamor Branch at Villamor Airbase, Pasay City; Sta. Rosa Branch at Balibago, Sta. Rosa, Laguna, and; Baguio Branch along Upper Session Road, Baguio City. Its ATM services are linked with Bancnet and Megalink.

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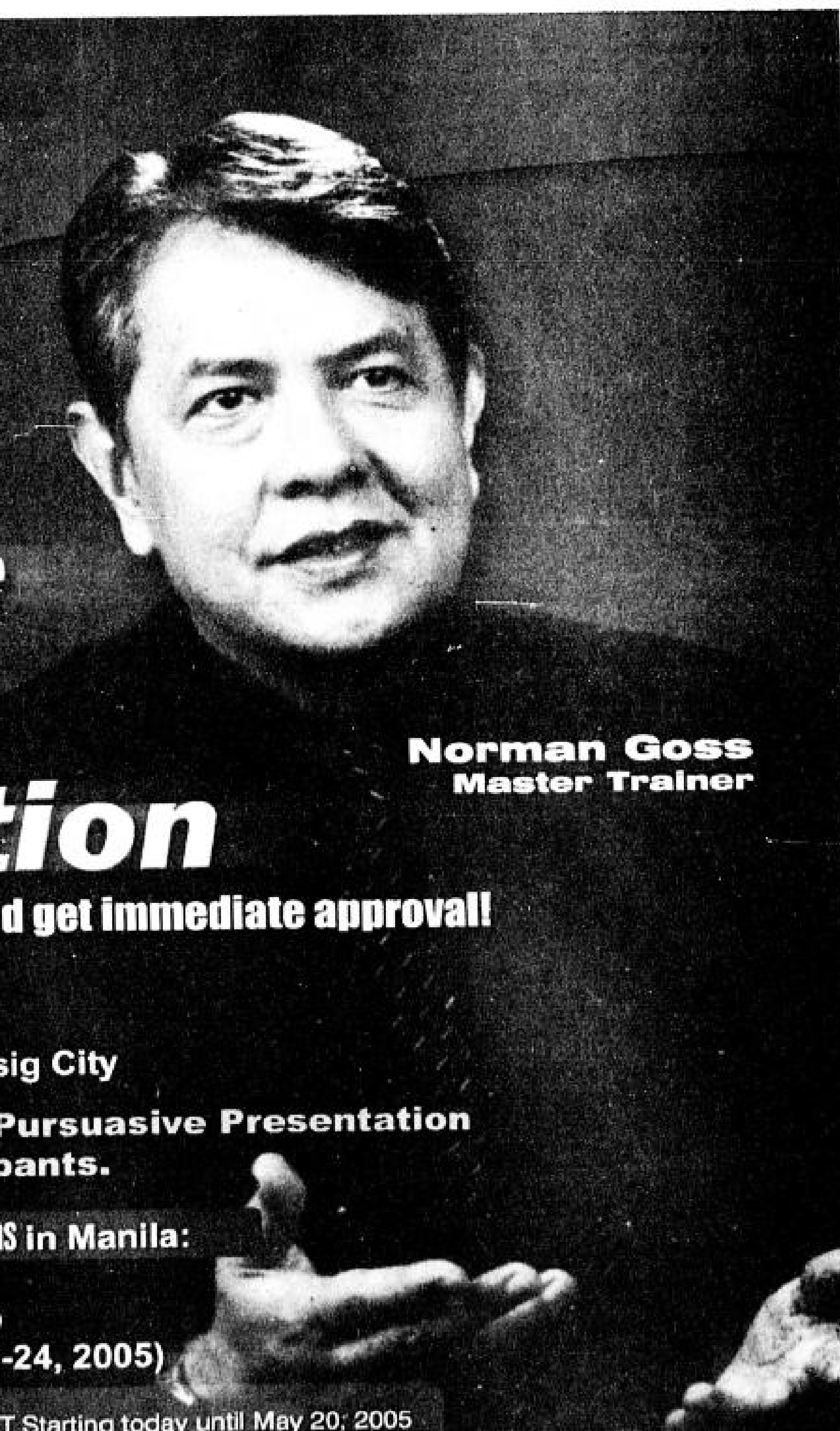

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July 22-23, 2005, (8: 30 am to 5:30 pm)

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Workshop will focus on building your Pursuasive Presentation skills and is limited to only 25 participants.

Other must attend **Norman Goss Signature Programs** in Manila:

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OBITUARIES

WEDNESDAY, JULY 6, 2005

RATE
P245 per column centimeter
(All prices exclusive of E-VAT)

DEADLINE
for reservations / cancellations / corrections
Monday to Sunday
12:00 noon
Day before publication

In loving memory
on the
First Death Anniversary of

LYDIA DUMLAO VALDEZ

(April 10, 1920 – July 6, 2004)

Her husband **Simeon M. Valdez**; daughters and sons-in-law **Bituin** and **Rico Salcedo, Aurora, Cielo, Suerte** and **Ibarra Crisostomo, Marie** and **Jesse Guevara, Fili** and **Lester Duldulao**; son **Noel**; grandchilren and great grandson request relatives and friends to pray for the eternal repose of her soul and to remember her always in their prayers.

A Holy Mass will be held at 5:00 p.m. on July 6 at the **Nativity of the Lord,** Ermin Garcia St., Cubao, Quezon City.

Masses will also be offered in her memory at the following Churches:

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Shrine Parish *Doña Juana Rodriguez, New Manila, Quezon City*	6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
Immaculate Concepcion Cathedral Parish *Lantana St., Cubao Quezon City*	6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
St. Benedict Chapel *Alabang Hills Village, Muntinlupa City*	6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
St. Joseph Convent of Perpetual Adoration *Hemady St. cor. 11th St., New Manila, Quezon City*	6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
Holy Family Church *Auburn Blvd., Citrus Heights, California, USA*	8:30 a.m.

FRANCISCO N. VILLAFRIA

of Nasugbu, Batangas

Joined his Creator on 4 July, 2005 at the age of 82.

His loving son **Dr. Ruel B. Villafria**; his brother and sister; relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at his residence in Nasugbu, Batangas.

Interment will be on 7 July, 2005 at Lian Memorial Park following the 2:00 p.m. Memorial Mass at St. Francis Xavier Parish Church in Nasugbu, Batangas.

SOZONTE ALZATE DOMINGO, M.D.

Peacefully joined his Creator on July 3, 2005 at the age of 65.

He is survived by his beloved wife **Dr. Erlinda Capili-Domingo**; children **Atty. Jesus Gabriel, Dr. Ma. Consuelo, Engr. Nathaniel**, and **Jesson Zabdiel**; mother **Gallardina**; sisters & in-laws **Priscilla Molina, Edith & John Tuscano, Bella & Carmelo Pariñas**, and **Aleli & Lorenzo Pariñas**; nieces, nephews, and other relatives.

His body lies in state at Chapel K, La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be on Saturday, July 9, 2005 at Heaven's Gate, Antipolo City after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at Funeraria Paz.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."

— 2 Corinthians 5:8

A Minister of the Lord

REV. LYDIA NAZARIO NIGUIDULA

Joined her Creator on July 2, 2005, at the age of 76

She lies in state at the UCCP-Ellinwood Malate Church
1660 Vasquez St., Malate, Manila
Thanksgiving Services at 6:00 PM everyday.
Necrological Service on Wednesday, July 6, 2005 at 8:00 PM
Interment at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, 11:00 AM, Thursday, July 7, 2005

She is survived by her brothers and sisters: Luciano, Cloe, Conrado, Ana Victoria, Faustino and Josue.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

GEN. MARCELINO B. BARBA (RET.)

Who passed away in the grace of our Lord on June 10, 2005

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy, and who in countless ways condoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

In Loving Memory of

MA. ROSARIO S. VALTE

"Chayee"

St. Paul College Manila HS '80
De La Salle University '84

who passed on to eternal life on July 2, 2005 at the age of 42.

Her husband **ERIC**; children **ERICA, ERIN, ERIC II** and **ELISE**; mother **Maria E. Gennaoui**; father **Arcadio Sta. Cruz**; brothers **Rommel, Edward** and **Archie**; sisters **Daniela** and **Bea**; and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Our Lady of the Lake, Queen of Peace Shrine, Dagatan Boulevard (Sampalok Lake), San Pablo City, Laguna. Nightly Masses at 7:00 p.m.

Final date of cremation will be on July 7, 2005 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at the OLLQP Shrine.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." — John 3:16

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

METRO MANILA

- **LAS PIÑAS**
  - FUNERARIA FILIPINAS
    187 Real St., Zapote Alabang, Las Piñas; Tels. 873-0507; 873-0024
- **MAKATI**
  - DON BOSCO CHAPELS
    Pasay Road, Makati City; Tel. 894-5932 to 34
  - FUNERARIA FILIPINAS
    865 J.P. Rizal St., Poblacion, Makati City; Tels. 890-3556; 899-8191
  - LOYOLA MEMORIAL CHAPELS
    EDSA cor. Bernardino St., Guadalupe, Makati City; Tels. 895-1011 to 19
  - MALABED FUNERAL SERVICE
    3-A Coronado St., Guadalupe Viejo, Makati City; Tel. 890-63-18
  - SANTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO PARISH
    Forbes Park, Makati City; Tel Nos. 843-8838/30; Fax No. 843-9223
  - ST. ALPHONSUS MARY DE LIGOURI PARISH
    Magallanes Village, Makati City, Tels. 852-8228; 852-7284
- **MALABON**
  - FLORESCO FUNERAL HOME
    219 Gen. Luna St., Concepcion, Malabon, Metro Manila;
    Tels. 2812963; 2813034; 2810522
- **MANDALUYONG**
  - SANTUARIO DE SAN JOSE PARISH
    East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City; Telefax 724-4139; 725-2044
- **MANILA**
  - DULCE MEMORIAL SERVICES
    Jose Abad Santos Ave. cor. Dinalupihan St., Manuguit, Manila
    Tels 712-5102, 741-5125; 741-5133; Fax No. 711-3064
  - LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
    1601 C.M. Recto Ave. cor. T. Mapua, Manila;
    Tels 711-6931 to 35, 732-4795, 732-2827
  - POPULAR MEMORIAL CHAPELS, INC.
    2141 Rizal Ave., Sta. Cruz, Manila; Tel. Nos. 254-0867, 254-0839
  - ST. MARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL
    16-15 G. Tuazon cor. Loreto St., Sampaloc, Manila; Tels. 749-3679; 781-1772
  - UNIVERSAL FUNERAL SERVICE & MEMORIAL CHAPELS
    2026 Rizal Ave., Sta. Cruz, Manila. Tels. 493-4458, 493-4540
  - WELINGTON FUNERAL SERVICES
    1511 Gen. Luna St., Paco, Manila, Tel. 302-5447
- **MARIKINA**
  - ERIC SANTIAGO MEMORIAL CHAPELS
    26 Bayanbayan Ave. Concepcion I, Marikina City; Tels. 942-6044; 475-1177
  - F. SANTIAGO MEMORIAL HOMES
    9 V. Gomez & 13 V. Gomez St., San Roque, Marikina City;
    Tels. 646-1725 or 646-1730
  - LOYOLA MEMORIAL PARK CHAPELS & CREMATORY SERVICES
    Loyola Memorial Park, A. Bonifacio Avenue, Tañong, Marikina City
    Tels 941-3196 to 98, 941-3676; Telefax 941-3577
  - PAKET SANTIAGO MEMORIAL HOMES
    13 V. Gomez St., San Roque, Marikina City; Tels. 646-1725; 646-1730
- **PARAÑAQUE**
  - HOLY TRINITY MEMORIAL CHAPELS
    Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat Rd., Sucat, Parañaque City;
    Tels. 825-1298, 825-1291, Telefax: 825-1314
  - LA FUNERARIA PAZ, SUCAT, INC.
    Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat, Parañaque; Tels. 820-1592; 825-9947; 825-8635
  - LINCOLN MEMORIAL SERVICES, INC.
    Ground Floor, JEMP Bldg., J. Cabarrus cor. Monserrat Sts., Phase I,
    BF Commercial Center, Parañaque, Metro Manila
  - RIZAL FUNERAL HOMES
    8187 Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat, Parañaque City; Tels. 826-1376; 826-9682; (0915) 712-1220
- **PASAY**
  - RIZAL FUNERAL HOMES
    438 Cementina St., Pasay City; Tels. 831-1204
  - VERONICA MEMORIAL HOMES
    Official NBI Morgue 517-A Arnaiz St., Pasay City;
    Tels. 831-3797; 844-7846; 843-1801; 845-4836
- **PASIG**
  - ARLINGTON EAST THE GARDEN CHAPELS
    C. Raymundo St. cor. Mercedes Ave., San Miguel Ave., Pasig City
    Tels. 747-8599; 747-8609 • Telefax 641-1760
  - FUNERARIA ANGEL QUIOGUE
    No. 57 Pasig Boulevard Extension, Pasig City; Tels. 641-7909; 641-1735
- **QUEZON CITY**
  - ARLINGTON MEMORIAL CHAPEL
    12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City; Tels. 715-1025; 715-1031; 715-1027
  - LA FUNERARIA LAWRENCE BAQUIRAN
    #23 Pato St., Project 2, Quezon City; Tel. 434-3258
  - LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
    143 G. Araneta Ave. cor. Kaliraya St., Quezon City
    Tels. 749-3806 to 11; 712-3001; 743-8502 or 05
  - NACIONAL MEMORIAL HOMES
    264 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City; Tels. 713-5231 to 35; 714-0867; 714-0868
  - ST. PETER FUNERAL HOMES
    296 Quezon Ave., Quezon City; Tels. 372-5084; 410-9286/87
- **TAGUIG-PATEROS**
  - FUNERARIA ANGEL QUIOGUE
    M. Almeda St., Pateros, Metro Manila; Tels. 642-3010; 633-3602
  - GARDEN OF MEMORIES MEMORIAL PARK
    Calsadang Bago, Pateros, Metro Manila, Tels. 642-8181 to 82
  - HERITAGE PARK
    Bayani Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
    Tels. (DL) 845-2341 to 42, (TL) 845-2334 to 38 loc. 110/112

PROVINCIAL

- **ALBAY**
  - LIGNON HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS, INC.
    Bugtong Road, Legaspi City; Tels. (052) 820-0188; 0917-2074152
- **BACOLOD**
  - ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
    Ground Flr. Rolling Hills Chapel, 27th-Lacson St., Mandalagan, Bacolod City; Tel. 433-7132
- **BAGUIO**
  - LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
    79 Naguilian Rd., Baguio City; Tel. (074) 443-3337; (074) 442-3117
- **BATAAN**
  - SANTUARIO GARDEN & CHAPELS
    Talisay Road, Balanga City, Bataan; Tels. (047) 2370843 • 7911766
- **BULACAN**
  - FUNERARIA TUASON
    Poblacion, San Miguel, Bulacan 3011;
    Tels. (044) 764-0281; 678-0266; (0917) 895-0603
- **CAVITE**
  - FUNERARIA SAMSON
    145 Bayan Luma, Imus, Cavite; Tels. (046) 471-3375; 471-2875
  - LA FUNERARIA SAPINOSO
    G. Tirona St., Imus, Cavite,
    Tels. (046) 471-3386, (046) 471-4417; (046) 571-1978
- **CEBU**
  - COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
    Nivel Hills, Lahug, Cebu City; Tels. 231-0721, 231-3182
  - CEBU ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
    Cebu Branch: A.S. Fortuna Street, Banilad, Mandaue City, Cebu;
    Tels. 346-2543; 346-2601
- **DAVAO**
  - COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
    Camus Ext. cor. J. Abad Santos, Davao City;
    Tels. (082) 227-1201; 227-1258
- **ILOCOS**
  - LA FUNERARIA LAWRENCE BAQUIRAN
    #27 Crisologo St., Vigan, Ilocos Sur; Tel. 722-2730;
    Cell (0917) 5680136; (0917) 5680145
- **LAGUNA**
  - SAN RAMON FUNERAL HOMES
    2020 Brgy. Dita, Sta. Rosa, Laguna
    Tels (049) 837-5652; 531-4142; Fax (049) 531-4989
  - ZUASOLA FUNERAL HOMES
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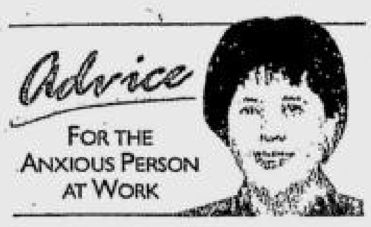
Confused employee is bothered by political turmoil

By Tita Datu Puangco



LAST week has been a confusing week for me. Opposition groups marched in the streets asking for the ouster of President Arroyo. The administration claims that the election results reflected the will of the people and that President Arroyo won. Objectively, how can we know who really won without resorting to "snap elections" or another people power revolution"?

I also hear people asking who will lead us if President Arroyo resigns? Our current politicians are equally corrupt. How can we develop upright yet competent leaders? What kind of leaders do we seek? The current situation cannot last. I try daily to focus on my work but the present political situation disturbs me.

Confused Employee

What you posed in your letter could be an interesting exercise in problem-solving. Once again, I think it is necessary to engage in out-of-the-box thinking. One way is a transparent recounting of the provincial canvass results by a joint commission of Commission on Elections and National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections . It has to be open to the public, devoid of influence from politicians. Then, whoever wins, governs the country. At this point, what is critical is to respect the sovereign will of the people. We have to move from opinion to fact, as to who actually won the elections.

Leadership training

Many are bothered by the question as to who will be president if President Macapagal-Arroyo resigns. Frankly, we have many qualified people who can lead our country. We see them in business, in nongovernmental organizations, in the academe. But most of them are not interested in politics because they realize that the current state of politics does not resonate with their own true values. A friend of mine said that we continue to be "elitist" when we talk of political leaders. We have not gone out of our traditional notion that the person has to come from a political family or be a celebrity to win.

In business, hot topics today are succession planning, management and leadership development. Companies are increasingly aware that for their companies to survive and thrive, they need qualified leaders. Unfortunately in our country today, we don't have leadership programs to train and hone political leaders. We see the young, idealistic, honest and well-performing local government executives struggling to break into national politics. Unfortunately, mechanisms do not exist to make this transition affordable and possible.

Assessment process

Last week, I was in Iloilo facilitating a strategy planning session. A former mayor now retired from politics reflects on his experiences. Politics can be expensive, thankless and frustrating. How can good men be encouraged to consider politics as a vocation?

What kind of national leaders should we have? Over dinner, my children proposed an assessment process for leaders. Once again, their proposal may sound outrageous but for me it makes a lot of sense. All candidates are asked to work for one week as messengers. They are to ensure that they are able to plan their day, complete their deliveries and ensure customer satisfaction. At the end of an exhausting week, they get paid the salary of the typical messenger.

Based on their week-long experience, they propose a relevant program of governance for the city (thinking that later this can be done for the country). They then will understand the economic situation of the general population, their health, the efficiency of transportation, the traffic and the pollution. They can then go through *revalida* to defend their program before a panel of citizens coming from all sectors of society.

Ideal leader

What kind of leader must we seek today?

First, he or she must be a leader who can unite the different sectors of our society to work for the common good. Every citizen must be able to relate to a national vision and see his or her contribution to making the "dream" happen. The person must also be able to build on the accomplishments of past administrations, instead of disregarding them. What troubles our nation today is the great social and economic divide, between the haves and the have-nots, between the elite and the *masa*. Only if we have fraternity and solidarity can we start redefining what quality of life really means, not in cold economic indicators but in terms relevant to an ordinary person. Only if we see the whole, can we feel connected and empowered as a nation.

Second, he or she must be a leader who possesses wisdom, capable of managing one's self. Over the weekend, I was reading a book entitled "Presence" co-authored by Senge, Jaworski, Scharmer and Flowers. They cited the Confucian theory about leadership that says, "If you want to be a leader, you have to be a real human being." You must recognize the true meaning of life before you can become a great leader. You must understand yourself first.

It requires leadership cultivation of seven meditative skills: awareness, stopping, calming, stillness, peace, true thinking and attainment. This concept may be difficult to appreciate considering the importance we place today on speed and technology. And yet in our hurry to change, we lose out on what is truly essential.

Most leaders fail because of their lack of discipline and clear thinking, especially when confronting the problems of current reality. When a leader can see, not just from the brain, but also from the heart, then his capability to empathize and understand his followers expand. He or she will have true concern and respect for people.

Ethical leadership

Third, he or she must be an ethical leader. Every leader struggles through situations, decisions and problems. Through these struggles, it is vital to be guided by a moral compass. It requires listening to that "inner voice," the voice of conscience telling him or her what is the right thing to do. The growth of charismatic groups and movements in our country gives us hope and consolation as people strive for conversion and renewal. Our country is undergoing a crisis that may be a turning point. It is signaling the dying of the old order of traditional politics with its sickening smell of corruption and immoral compromises. Hopefully, it is ushering in the new order of true concern for ethical behavior and the common good.

Fourth, he or she must have competence and intelligence. Leading a nation in a complex world requires the ability to think profoundly, systemically and strategically. We need leaders who can think through intelligent yet practical ways of moving our country forward.

Meantime, focus on your work and cast even your political cares unto the Lord.

(Ms Puangco is CEO and chair of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send feedback through e-mail to advice@ancillaedc.com.ph *or fax to* 892-2902.)

People at Work columnists chat with readers online

By Candy G. Villanueva
Contributor

IT all started with the simple desire to sympathize with the working wounded and the wish to offer career counsel to jobseekers. The salesman who was on his feet the whole day bearing the heat of the sun to make the first sale, the call center agent who had heard every kind of obscenity there is over the phone, the secretary who believes she can do so much more than just typing dictations, the mother who wants to do her reports at home and the not-so-fresh graduate who's been looking for a job since he got his diploma last year. Like you, they need someone on their side. Someone to tell them what they're doing wrong, someone to tell them that they're on the right track, or simply someone to give them a pat on the shoulder or an encouraging nudge on the back. The Philippine Daily Inquirer has been doing just that since the turn of the millennium through People at Work, a subsection of the Business Section.

Fifth year celebration

Last month, People at Work celebrated its five years of giving and sharing practical workplace survival tips, career development advice and inspiring stories by offering people at work, and the people looking for work, an opportunity to vent their work woes and ask for advice in a more personal manner.

Through the wonders of technology, People at Work's readers had the chance to chat with two of the section's popular columnists, Ernie Cecilia, president of EC Business Solutions and Career Center and Ask Your Career Counselor columnist and Bob Rosner, best-selling author, speaker and webmaster, and author of Working Wounded, an internationally syndicated column carried by People at Work (PAW). The community chat started roughly due to technical difficulties but in spite of the glitches, several of the working masses were enlightened on the importance of skills to get hired and how to deal with difficult bosses.

Soon as the PAW community chat commenced, a barrage of questions were fired. Oddly, most of the questions did not come from the readers but from one of the columnists, Ernie Cecilia. People at Work's career counselor asked the participants what they thought were the most pressing problems people at work face today. Several offered valid answers but the resounding concern is finding a job. Cecilia addressed this most basic issue immediately.

Mismatch of needs

Last August 2004, Cecilia chaired the Employment Summit sponsored by many organizations led by the Employers Confederation of the Philippines or ECOP. During the summit, there were over 26,900 jobs waiting to be filled. Surprisingly, in spite of the clamor for more employment opportunities, not even 1,000 job applicants were actually hired during the job fair. A similar trend is evident in the classified ads. Cecilia notes that in the Job Market of the PDI alone, repeat ads are often seen for jobs that aren't filled sooner. These figures simply show that there is no scarcity of job opportunities as most claim, rather, there is a lack of qualified and skilled applicants. Cecilia attributes this sad fact to several possible reasons.

Losing focus

"Firstly, there is a mismatch between the needs of the industry and the products of the academe." The second reason is also related to education. "Jobseekers have the mistaken notion that education is the most important tool in order to have a great career. After two years at work, education has little or nothing to do with career success," claims Cecilia.

According to this career counselor, most schools are losing their focus. They spend all their resources on teaching students what they learned when they themselves were students. Somewhere along the way, they forgot to teach the future employees and employers lessons about the world outside the classroom. "Most schools seem to be in the business of solely turning out graduates, not ensuring the graduates employability or usefulness for work." Over 25 years of experience and training in the field of human resources, Cecilia discovered that workers use only 10 percent to 35 percent of what they learned in school. He says the key to getting hired is to first learn the skill to get hired more than learning the skill to do the job.

Skill to get hired

According to Cecilia, those who get hired or promoted are not necessarily those who know the job best, but those who know best how to get hired and promoted. The first step is getting noticed. Cecilia says to strive to stand out among the hundreds of applicants who are vying for that single position. He suggests looking at it from the point of view of the recruiter. Aside from thinking of selling yourself, think of what the recruiter is planning to buy. "Then, package yourself in such a way that the recruiter will heave a sigh of relief after seeing you or your resumé."

To package yourself, do some research. Find out about the company you are eyeing. Learn their vision, mission and values. Cecilia says that fitting with the company is just as important as fitting the job. After all, jobs are dynamic and constantly changing. If you fit the organization, you won't have to worry about losing your job in case your department gets dissolved.

To fit the job, find out about competencies, skills and values. Then, customize your resumé according to the company's requirements. Cecilia warns that customizing does not mean fabricating. Simply highlight what the recruiter is looking for. The next step to getting noticed is confidence. Cecilia reminds applicants that "if you think you are beaten, you are."

Cecilia adds that the skills needed to get hired are also the skills needed to get promoted. "If you want to get promoted, you must also master the art of being noticed. Contrary to popular belief, performance does not always speak for itself."

Difficult bosses

While jobseekers worry about how to get one foot at the door, the rest who are already in have other qualms. The most common grievance is dealing with difficult bosses. "I find it hard to work with my boss. I have the feeling he doesn't like me," laments a writer for an advertising agency. It was around 11 p.m. in Seattle, Washington when readers from the Philippines consulted with Bob Rosner, the Working Wounded doctor. Although a bit tired and sleepy, Rosner addressed the writer's concern through a step by step approach.

Rosner advises to start with the people around the boss. The columnist says to buy them a cup of coffee and pick their brain. In other words, learn from your coworkers. Find out what makes them get along well with the boss. The next step is to a look in the mirror. Take time out for self-evaluation. Rosner suggests asking yourself, "Does the boss have reason to be critical of you? Do you complain a lot? Are you a slacker?"

Communicating issues

Once you have done your homework, communicate your issue with the boss. If communication is difficult, consider talking to the human resources department. Sometimes, they can provide support or advice. "But realize that this is your boss, so there is always a risk when you 'escalate' a conflict within the person who signs your paycheck," warns Rosner.

All in all, Rosner summarizes it into doing one's homework before confronting the conflict head on. Several other readers were raring with questions but, unfortunately, time was beginning to take its toll on the doctor of the working wounded. It was almost midnight at his home in Seattle when the discussions wrapped up. But before he bid the readers good night, he congratulated People at Work. "I am proud to be part of the People at Work section. To me, it is the best workplace content that is in any newspaper anywhere in the world. Congratulations on the first five years; here's to many more."

(*E-mail feedback to* candyvillanueva@pldtdsl.net.)

(*If you want to participate in future online chats with columnists, send your name, company and position title if applicable, contact number and e-mail address to* peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph.)

Experienced CEO helps ...

From page B12

What about his management style? Says Jacob, "I always try to get competent people so that I can delegate. I try not to get in my staff's way when they're working. I let them do their work." He advocates openness and communication and therefore, welcomes assessment meetings and consultations.

Motivating people

People are generally self-motivated, contends Jacob. He says, "I've seen this many times in those I have worked with. Everybody wants to do a good job. They're eager to succeed. Nobody wants to fail." And this includes Jacob who maintains that the most powerful motivation is the desire to succeed.

To Jacob's mind, "success is having the capacity to be happy wherever you are," though it could also be equated with achievement. Needless to say, his achievements are countless. Some of the outstanding ones include being instrumental in privatizing Petron, bringing the Pag-ibig Fund to everyone's doorstep and in National Housing Authority, building more low-cost houses than at any other time.

Other accomplishments

One significant achievement on his part and his wife's, according to Jacob, are their wonderful children—a daughter and two sons—and their three grandchildren. Jacob has been married for 35 years to Floranie Polo, a former classmate at the Ateneo Law School. Floranie is a practicing lawyer and is managing partner of Jacob and Jacob, a law firm she and her husband own.

Jacob, incidentally, has other responsibilities besides STI. He serves as chairman and managing partner of CEOs Inc., a business and management consulting firm. He's also chairman of GROW, Inc., a placement company, vice chairman of CBV Asset Management Corp. and chairman of Advent Capital and Finance Corp. He sits in the board of PhilSteel Corp., Jollibee Foods Inc. and other companies. An active member of the Management Association of the Philippines, where he served as president in 1998, Jacob is also a member of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines and the Makati Business Club.

Apparently, one who keeps sight of his ideals to this day, Jacob looks up to his role model, Fr. Robert Rice, his professor in Philosophy at the Ateneo de Naga. He recounts, "he was very strict, but he always tried to reach out to us students. I wanted to emulate his calmness and spirituality. His calmness struck me and left a lasting impression." The priest, long retired now, lives in Cebu. Jacob remains in touch with him.

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PEOPLE at WORK

Editor **Raul O. Marcelo**
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Experienced CEO helps students prepare for future employment

By Cecile G. Garcia
Contributor

JACOB JOSEPH AGCAOILI

GIVEN his vast experience both in the government and the private sectors, it is not surprising to find Monico V. Jacob at the top rung of the corporate ladder once again. While he may not have sought it, there's no doubt that corporate leadership suits him perfectly well. After a string of successful stints as CEO of some of the largest government corporations and private companies, Jacob is now in the academe as president and CEO of the STI Education Services Group, the largest network of colleges in the country today. He joined STI last August 2003.

Jacob is a graduate of the Ateneo de Manila College of Law and was formerly a partner of the law firm Jacob, Acaban, Corvera, Valdez and Del Castillo. Earlier, he had finished Bachelor of Arts at the Ateneo de Naga. As a law student, he worked in the Senate and taught English and History on the side. He says, "I'm basically a trial lawyer. I was doing litigation work and was in court almost everyday."

CAREER TALES

CEO track record

Following the Edsa Revolution of 1986, Jacob, prodded by his good friend and province mate Joker Arroyo, decided to go into government service. "I was appointed commissioner of the Securities and Exchange Commission," he recalls. Later on, he became general manager of the National Housing Authority. He also served as CEO of the Pag-ibig Fund and was able to decentralize operations by establishing offices nationwide. In 1991, Jacob became chairman and CEO of Petron and concurrently, chairman and CEO of the Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC). He considers presiding over the privatization of Petron a significant highlight of his government career, which ended in 1998.

When he went back to the private sector, Jacob immersed himself in corporate recovery and rehabilitation work, one of his areas of specialty. "I was just letting things happen," he points out. "I never had a career plan. Then, my friend, Eusebio Tanco, a major stockholder of STI, came along and invited me to join him."

Quality education

As president and CEO of STI, Jacob says his basic duty is to run the company and to give it strategic direction. He expounds, "My primary responsibility is to make sure that quality education is delivered to our students, as well as to make sure that all departments respond to their needs. We're currently strengthening our curriculum development, faculty training and student assessment. I also have to ensure that quality control is insisted in all our franchises." STI, he allows, is also a business and he must see to its profitability in order to sustain it.

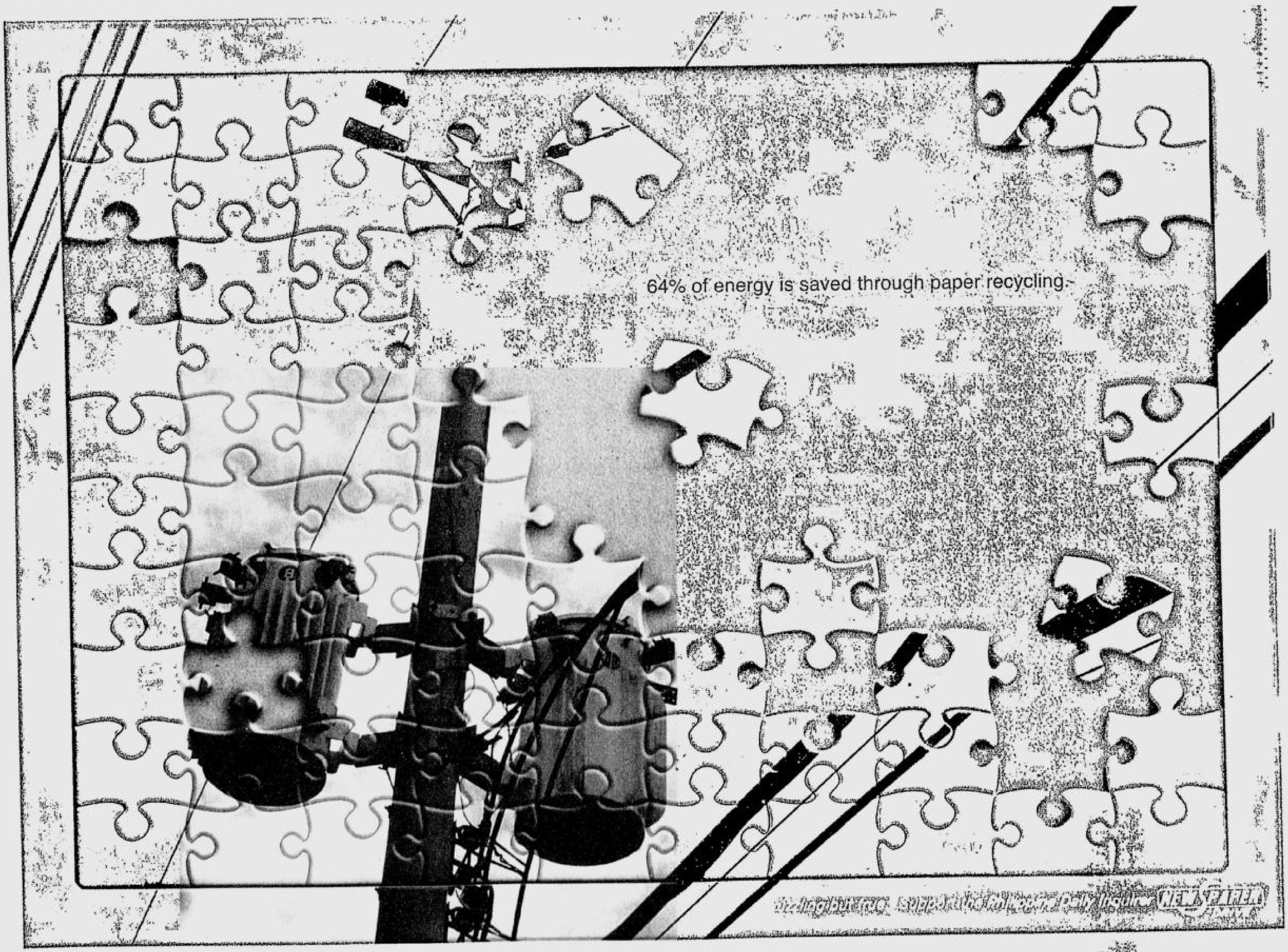
Systems Technology Institute, better known today as STI, which, incidentally is its corporate name, started out as a vocational school in 1983. Thirteen years later, in 1996, STI began offering four-year diploma courses in IT, health care, business and education. It has a total of 116 schools nationwide, both wholly-owned and franchises. Says Jacob, "STI goes beyond providing education. We have a placement arm. We see to it that our graduates are employed."

Right education for work

The biggest challenge he faces as STI chief, according to Jacob, is that of ensuring that students obtain the right education to prepare them for future employment. "It's quite satisfying when students graduate and find work and succeed. There is also satisfaction in knowing that you have done the right thing and that you have touched people's lives in the right way," maintains Jacob, going on to say that he's happy with STI's performance because it is indicative of the success of their efforts. "Success in any endeavor is seldom immediate," observes the CEO. "That's why I believe in pursuing whatever you have started. We've just reorganized here at STI. We have yet to see how effective it will be."

Jacob feels there is one important lesson he has learned from his law practice, from government service and from business and industry. He discloses, "I have realized that there is always somebody who knows more than I do, somebody brighter and smarter." He has great faith in the people he works with, he enthuses. "I have also learned that someone in a leadership position must know how to listen. What I know today comes from the people I have dealt with."

EXPERIENCED/B11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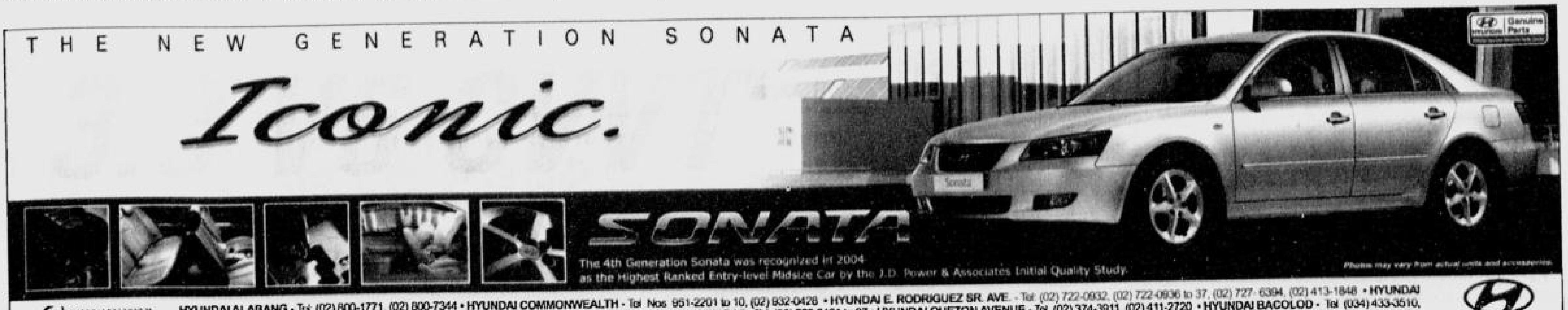

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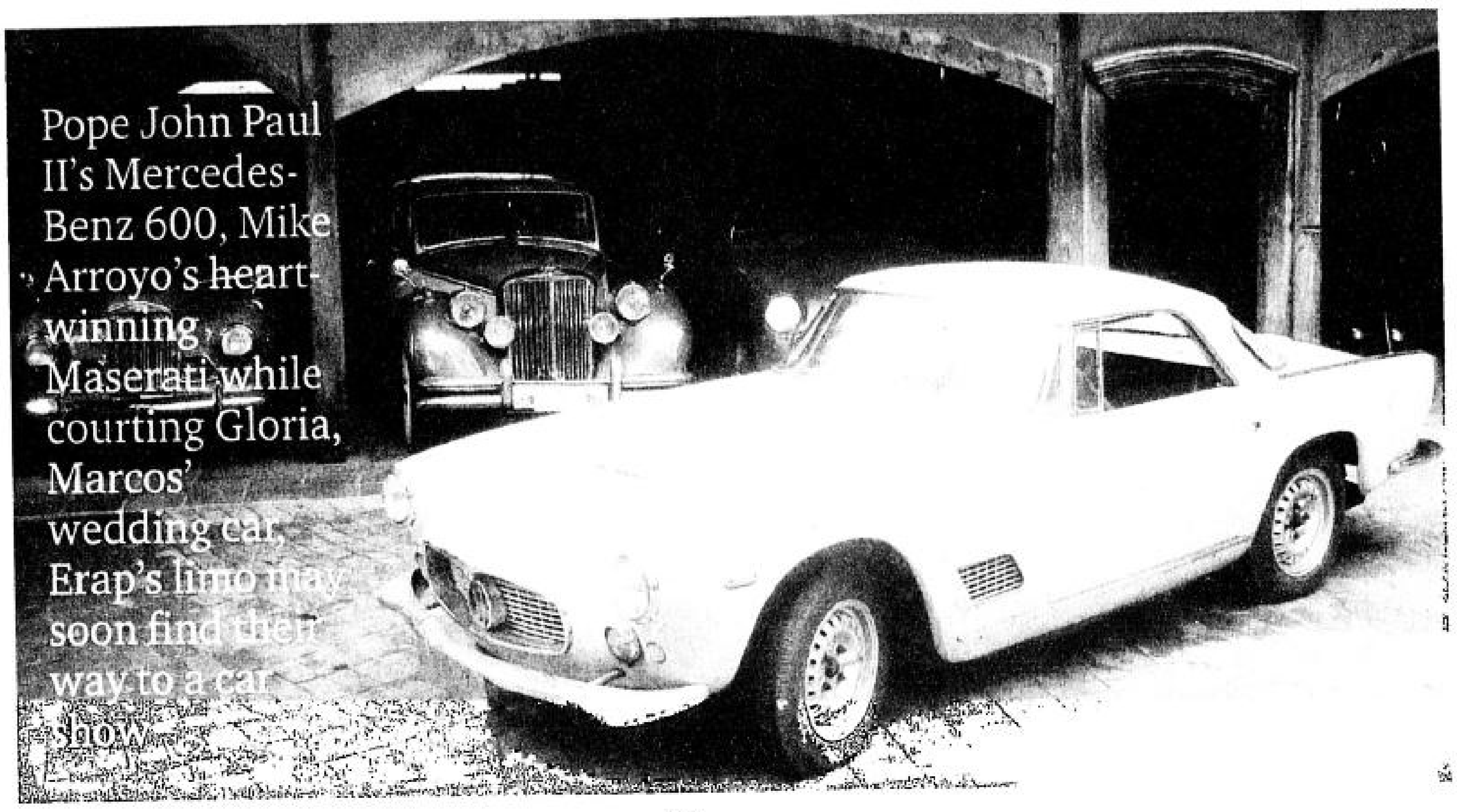

Pope John Paul II's Mercedes-Benz 600, Mike Arroyo's heart-winning Maserati while courting Gloria, Marcos' wedding car, Erap's limo may soon find their way to a car show

NOW owned by artist Ramon Diaz, the Maserati 3500 GT has its romantic significance. This was the car First Gentleman Mike Arroyo used in wooing Gloria Macapagal.

Restoration: a labor of love, a tribute to love

By Tessa R. Salazar

(Last of three parts)

ANOTHER historical car that once belonged to Cojuangco and ended up in Cito's hands is Pope John Paul II's Mercedes-Benz 600. The Benz was once used by the Pope while visiting Bacolod.

"Danding and I were at the Rockwell Manila Sports Car Club with friends Pinggoy Duque, health secretary, and Manny Dimaculangan (another classic car enthusiast). They were trying to help me get a Mercedes 600 limousine."

Cito said at that time they were haggling for a Mercedes-Benz 600 unit being offered to them.

"I thought that it looked like junk, but it actually cost P1.7 million. I offered to trade something for it. At that time Cojuangco heard us."

When Danding joined the group, they told him about Cito's dream to restore a Mercedes 600, and that the vehicle's owner was asking a steep price.

Cojuangco said he himself had a Mercedes 600 and offered it to Cito for restoration. "This guy could be very generous," Cito mused. "We have no business dealings. *Puro kotse lang kaming dalawa* (It's all just about cars)," he said.

CATS Motors also volunteered to help restore the Mercedes-Benz 600. Felix Ang of CATS looked for the company's retired Mercedes-Benz manager, a veteran of this model, to personally handle the restoration work.

Cito, an avid vintage car collector and restorer, said restoration work on a car takes an average of two to three years to complete. In that time, he said, he would expect to spend at least a million for the bigger old cars.

Painting big cars would be equivalent to painting two modern cars. The upholstery, likewise, would be equivalent to two cars. He employs 10 to 20 people to restore the cars. He has devised a system to make their jobs continuous so he wouldn't have to terminate their services after work on a car is finished.

Social obligation

Cito believes he has a social obligation to his people. Restoration works, he said, should be continuous, because if it takes too long it

RESTORATION/ C3

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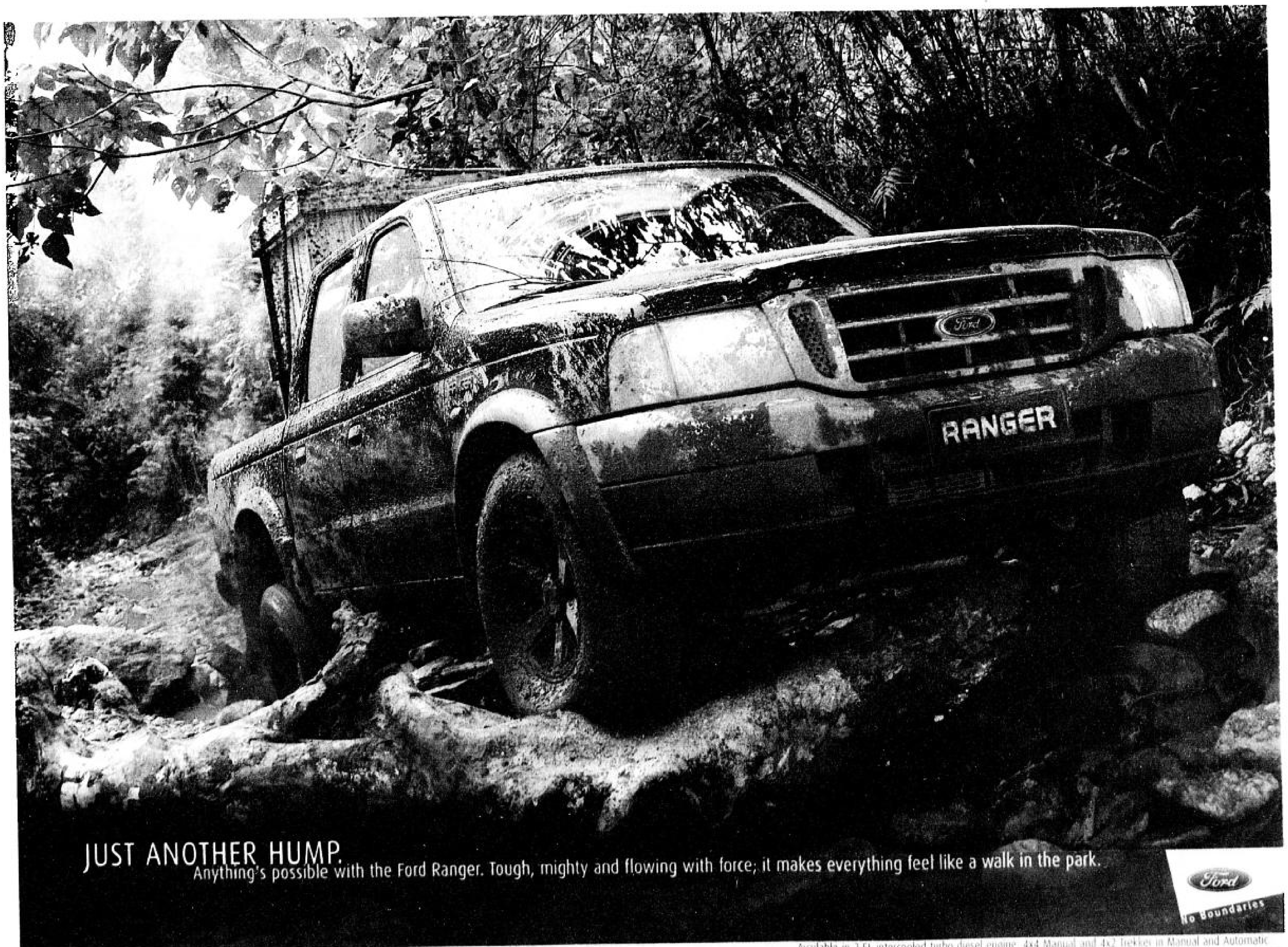
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Volvo V50: style, comfort and safety

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

LATELY, Volvo cars—long world-famous for safety—have turned into lifestyle statements. No longer boxy and square, Volvos in the last few years have become stylish while retaining, if not improving, their class-leading safety features and ride quality. This transformation is most apparent in the 2005 Volvo V50, the five-door sports wagon that replaces the V40.

Station wagons or estate cars (as they are known in Europe) are always in danger of being typecast as boring, utilitarian family haulers, just like minivans. So here comes Volvo (which is owned by Ford Motor Co.) jazzing up the genre by building the new V50 on the same platform as the Mazda3 and European Ford Focus hatchback, thus ensuring sporty roadholding, and then powering it with the smooth, torquey, five-cylinder, 2.4-liter engine of the 2005 Volvo S40.

Version

The V50, in fact, is the estate version of the S40, not only sharing the same chassis and powertrain, but also practically the same interior that is dominated by the ultra-slim aluminum center console. The eye-catching center stack, only one inch thick, houses the audio and ventilation controls with storage space behind to keep oddments and small stuff out of sight.

Although the V50 looks smaller than its predecessor, it is roomier and offers comfortable seating for five occupants including the driver. Up to 6.92 cubic feet of cargo space is available when the 60/40 rear seat is folded down. However, you have to remove the headrests before you can fold the seat. But this shortcoming is minor when you see the attention to detail, high-quality materials and excellent fit-and-finish of the cabin as epitomized by the cleverly designed center console.

Cruise control, a multifunctional steering wheel, dual electronic climate control, cabin air filters, a trip computer, an auto-dim rearview mirror, power driver's seat with three memory settings, reading lamps front and rear, cupholders front and rear and an audio system with in-dash CD player and six speakers are standard equipment.

In vogue

The exterior of the V50 is unmistakably classic Volvo sculpture updated by the gently rounded nose, projector-type headlights and short hood so much in vogue today. The curved roof line with roof rails, cab-forward stance and abrupt rear section contribute to the sporty, active lifestyle look.

When it comes to performance, the normally aspirated in-line-five-cylinder, 2.4-liter DOHC 20-valve engine producing 170 bhp/6,000 rpm max horsepower and 230 Nm/2,200-4,400 rpm max torque does not disappoint. Mated to a 5-speed Geartronic adaptive tranny, the V50's powerplant is capable of smoothly hitting 170 km per hour (kph) on a traffic-free highway with no mechanical, wind or road noise invading the cabin. Equipped with the Ford Focus' sporty underpinnings, the V50 handles crisply—consistently agile yet stable and strongly gripping the road even at high speeds.

Credit the V50's good body control to its exceptional torsional rigidity, broad track and long wheelbase, independent wheel suspension and multilink rear axle with stabilizer bars front and rear. On bumpy roads, the V50 cushions its passengers without the wallowing or overt slack associated with some Ford-designed chassis. The combination of high performance (especially in the 2.5-liter, 218 bhp light pressure turbocharged V5 T5 which, unfortunately, is not sold here) and reassuring road manners raises the bar in the luxury compact leisure-and-sports wagon segment.

New approach

More so when you look at the V50's safety equipment: a patented new front-end structure made of four different grades of steel for maximum energy absorption in case of a collision, stability traction control, six airbags, an anti-whiplash system, inflatable side curtains, anti-submarine seats with three-point auto pretensioner seatbelts on all five seats, rigid cross members in the doors to provide side impact protection and auto door unlock in a crash situation. All the passive and active safety features, together with the transverse-mounted, slim-design 5-cylinder engine, constitute Volvo's Intelligent Vehicle Architecture (VIVA), a new approach to vehicle safety design.

In terms of security, the V50 has the Volvo Guard Alarm with battery backup and immobilizer, electronic key-integrated remote control with two-step door opening, central locking system and safe approach and home-safe lighting.

Bottom line, for a compact station wagon/estate car, the V5 is stylish and fun to drive with excellent road manners and a high safety level. No wonder it was awarded the prestigious Golden Steering Wheel Trophy last year by the German paper "Bild am Sontag" in the estate class of the readers' category, besting seven competitors and marking the second time that this Swedish marque won a German award that was initiated 27 years ago. But of course, award-winning quality comes at a high price: P2,195,000 for the V5.

* * *

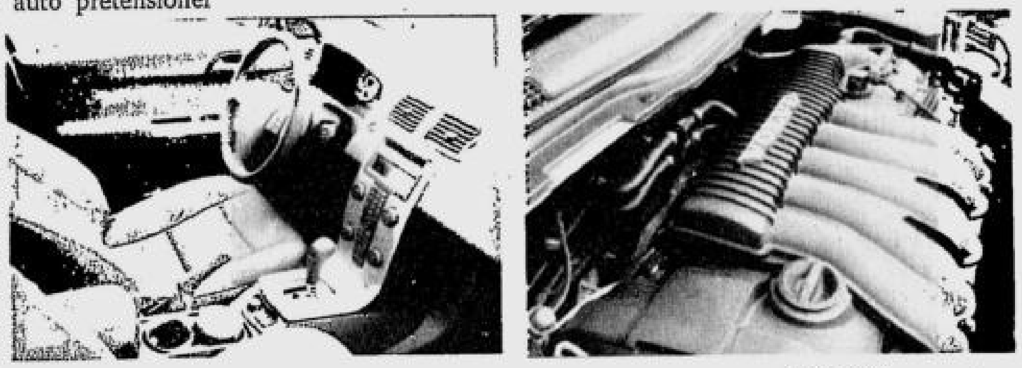
TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: The Philippines needs a Faith Lift!

* * *

(E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph)

THE VOLVO V50: raising the bar in the luxury leisure-and-sports compact wagon segment.

PHOTOS BY AIDA SEVILLA-MENDOZA



THE EYE-CATCHING, ultra-slim center console of the V50 is the interior's most attractive feature (left). The V50's 5-cylinder, 2.4-liter engine is the same as that of the Volvo S40 compact sedan (above).

FROM LEFT are Energy Usec Peter Abaya, LTFRB chair Elena Bautista, Optda winners Valentine Basas, Nicanor Consular and Allan Guevarra and Caltex country chair Randy Johnson.

Caltex names outstanding public transport drivers

FOR THEM, it's always safety first.

Proving that Filipinos can be responsible PUV drivers, Caltex Philippines Inc. recently named the winners of its second search for the Outstanding Public Transport Drivers (Optda).

The Optda recognizes PUV drivers' skill, competence, knowledge of traffic regulations, and contribution to society.

Through superior driving skills, high regard for safety and sheer determination, jeepney drivers Nicanor Consular from the Philippine Confederation of Drivers Organization-Alliance of Concerned Transport Operators (PCDO-Acto), Valentin Basas from the Makati Jeepney Operators and Drivers Alliance (MJODA) and Allan Guevarra from the Federation of Rizal-Cubao Operators and Drivers Association (Fercoda) proved their mettle and were honored as this year's Outstanding Public Transport Drivers.

The Optda is organized by Caltex in cooperation with the Department of Energy, the Safety Organization of the Philippines, the Land Transportation Office, the Metro Manila Development Authority, the Land Transport Franchising and Regulatory Board, the Philippine National Police, the National Bureau of Investigation and public transport associations in Metro Manila.

Each of the winners were awarded P100,000 cash prize, a StarCard worth P50,000 which can be used to purchase any Caltex product from StarCard affiliated service stations, and free accident insurance for one year from Hubertus Clausius.

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Vehicle dependability; NLEX new tact

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

IF you still don't know it, the world's three largest automakers today are General Motors Corp., Ford Motor Co. and Toyota Motor Co.

In a recent survey on vehicle dependability, the three emerged overall leaders.

The survey was conducted by the J.D. Power and Associates, an independent group that is very much respected in the United States since its inception in the 1980s.

In a June 30 Associated Press article written by Dee-Ann Durbin, the closely watched report measures dependability by questioning owners of 3-year-old vehicles about problems they're experiencing, such as wind noise or excessive brake wear. This year's survey questioned 50,635 owners of 2002 model-year cars and trucks.

Though it has a foreign flavor in it, I'm printing the piece in whole, for whatever its worth:

Chance Parker, executive director of product and research analysis at J.D. Power, said the industry showed a 12 percent improvement in this year's survey. The industry average was 237 problems per 100 vehicles this year, compared with 269 problems per 100 vehicles in 2004.

Parker said manufacturers fixed a variety of problems in the 2002 model year.

"Almost every manufacturer got better this year, and we don't always see that," Parker said. "Manufacturers have already picked all the low-hanging fruit, so now they have to tackle every little thing."

Lexus, Toyota's luxury brand, was the top-performing brand with 139 problems per 100 vehicles, while Kia was the worst performer with 397 problems. Hyundai Motor Co. showed the most improvement, with 260 problems per vehicle compared with 375 problems in the 2001 model year.

Parker said Hyundai also improved dramatically when J.D. Power did its initial quality survey in 2002. That survey measures problems in new vehicles in the first 90 days of ownership.

"The 2002 initial quality survey is when we first saw a really big improvement from Hyundai, and that has translated into really high durability," Parker said. "This seems to validate the progress they've made."

GM outstripped Ford, which had five segment winners, and Toyota, which had four.

Parker said GM's ranking might surprise some consumers who perceive poor quality at GM because of past vehicles. Clayton said GM recognizes the problem and is working hard to overcome it.

"It takes time, and we have to earn it," she said.

* * *

Several of the survey's best performers—such as the Buick Century, Chevy Prizm and Ford Windstar—are no longer made. But Clayton and Deborah Coleman, Ford's vice president of quality, said both companies have systems to ensure future vehicles earn similar ratings.

"These improvements are process-driven more than product-driven," said Coleman, who added that Ford was particularly proud that the Toyota and Mercury brands had similar ratings.

Century was the top-ranked premium midsize car and Windstar, the top minivan.

Parker said the appearance of the Toyota Prius on the list of top performers could help sales of hybrid cars because some consumers might have been wary about the long-term performance of those vehicles.

* * *

GM and Toyota also were the best performers in this year's initial quality survey, released last month.

Parker said the initial quality survey typically gets more attention because people are interested in new vehicles, but dependability is extremely important because good performers will have more loyal customers and lower warranty costs.

"We're always trying to make sure people understand that while dependability is not as sexy as the initial quality survey, at the end of the day it might be more important," Parker said.

* * *

The North Luzon Expressway's experiment in restoring order in our roads and highways seems to be gaining ground.

Since May, the Manila North Tollway Corp. (MNTC), operator of the newly rehabilitated and modernized NLEX, has been strictly enforcing the rules and regulations of the road. Basic rules like keeping the innermost (left) lane open and using that lane only for overtaking and maintaining the speed limit are now being monitored with zeal.

You must agree with me that chaos happen in our roads today mainly due to indifference, ignorance or plain arrogance. Sometimes, road anarchy deteriorates into road rage which could turn senselessly bloody.

* * *

The belief that you get to your destination faster if you break the rules is actually a dangerous thought because you endanger both yourself and the others around you.

Improving travel time and travel predictability really rests on the strict enforcement of road rules and regulations.

According to MNTC, that is being proven now at the NLEX.

Travel time is very predictable, the MNTC says, that even within the speed limitations imposed by the NLEX patrols, one gets to his destination mostly on time.

Safety has improved considerably and traffic has diminished substantially at NLEX even as there are now portions there that have given in to the onslaught of the rainy season.

Be that as it may, now might be a good idea for agencies like the LTO and MMDA (not to mention those Metro Manila LGUs, all of whom maintain their own traffic control units) to take a long hard look at how it's done at the NLEX. They might learn a thing or two—and improve the lives of Metro Manila's motorists in the process.

* * *

QUOTE ME. Have that under-chassis hosing every now and then to remove those flood-causing dirt that causes rust.

* * *

For comments, please e-mail at menju@pldtdsl.net.

Seven Stars: from zero to STi

CATCH MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

MANY performance automotive brands share a common lineage; they find their beginnings in the aerospace industry that were forged by the fires of the first two World Wars. Both the automotive and aerospace industries grew in a technologically exponential manner during these eras of conflict.

As each of the major industrial powers sought to build better aircraft that flew higher, faster and over greater distances, the direct effect on cars was engines that became more robust, developed more power and became more fuel efficient. These advances allowed many companies to switch over to "peace time" production and paved the way for their opening shots in a new kind of conflict: that of business success in the world automotive market.

The history of the Subaru marquee follows the "typical" pattern of a "sword into ploughshares" vehicle manufacturer. Its existence is credited to a single man, the need for then advanced aircraft and the flames of conflict. Near the end of the First World War, Chikuhei Nakajima, began the Aircraft Research Laboratory, in Ohta, Gunma Prefecture, just north of Tokyo.

Air power

The research of this naval officer, who saw the future of warfare in the air, lead him to the battlefields of France where his idea of the importance of air power was confirmed by the unforeseen success of wooden frame and cloth fuselage biplanes over the trenches and quagmire.

Nakajima left the military, found financial backers, and formed Nakajima Aircraft Works. Production began in 1918 with the Ohta factory delivering six aircraft for private customers. The following year the Japanese Imperial Army ordered 30-odd aircraft and the business was born in earnest. The rest, as they say, is history. The reorganized Nakajima Aircraft Co. Ltd. began building original designs and subcontracting the infamous Zero fighter of industrial rival Mitsubishi.

Records show that Nakajima built almost twice as many of these types of fighters as the designer. Chikuhei is also is also responsible for the development of the Kikka, Japan's first jet fighter, which was based on the groundbreaking German Messerschmitt Me262. It took to the air in August 1945 but the events of Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought an end to final production. Having built 26,000 aircraft from 1918 to 1945, 28 percent of Japan's airframe production during the war, the Nakajima aircraft effort closed its doors at war's end.

Origins of Subarus

Postwar Japan saw the aircraft builder reborn as Fuji Sangyo Co. Ltd., making its business in the general industrial parts sector. The company launched the Rabbit motor scooter in 1946, complete with 135-cc engine and surplus tires of fighter aircraft. The origins of Subaru-branded cars began almost a decade later in 1954 with the P1 prototype; something of a copy of its Toyota contemporary, the Crown.

True original Subarus were to come out in 1958, and these already adopted the six visible stars of the Taurus constellation that to this day adorn the hoods of their cars. Under the umbrella of Fuji Heavy Industries, the brand unveiled the Subaru 360 minicar. It utilized a 356-cc, two-stroke, 16-bhp engine that was mounted in the trunk and drove the rear wheels. This is a far cry from the modern cars that would cement the reputation of Subaru in 30 years to come.

The Alcyone, a 1985 model named after one of the stars in the marquee's constellation badge, was to soon make inroads in the American import market. With the now familiar all-wheel drive and a turbocharged, 137-bhp 1.8-liter engine, the XT (as the Alcyone was known in America) enjoyed brisk sales; eventually spawning a 2.7-liter, 150 bhp flat six model. This model also began to make an impact in the World Rally Championship, with places and points earned in the 1985 Safari Rally, in Kenya and in New Zealand. It is important to note that the WRC points in New Zealand were scored by legendary Kiwi rally ace, Peter Bourne. Fondly known as "Possum" to his fans, he drove for Subaru, in various levels of competition, until he met his tragic end just a few years ago, right before the Race to the Sky Hillclimb in New Zealand.

World model

Following the success of the XT/Alcyone model, Fuji Heavy upped the ante with the release of a world model: the Legacy in 1989. The hottest model carried a 2.0-liter boxer or horizontally opposed four-cylinder with 220 bhp care of a turbo charger. Given the previous involvement with the WRC, the Legacy also saw sideways rally action and became associated with names like Ari Vatanen, Per Eklund, Colin McRae and Richard Burns. The 1990 WRC season saw the first public involvement of the English Prodrive motorsport outfit with the in-house performance brand, Subaru Tecnica International or STi.

The WRC baton was soon passed over to a new chassis in 1992. With a prototype initially race-tested under the guise of a "short wheel base Legacy," the Impreza would bring the WRC handling, all-wheel-drive capability and turbo-powered boxer four to the world market. The small saloon was available with engines ranging from a 1.5-liter SOHC unit (designated the EJ15) with 97 bhp all the way to the fire breathing 240 bhp 2.0-liter flat four found on the rally-inspired WRX.

The Philippine market saw the release of the turbocharged Impreza WRX and nonturbo Legacy wagon in 1996. Both models featured the brand's four-wheel-drive systems, Japanese assembly and premium pricing, with the latter probably dictating the local fate of the brand. A new Impreza was launched in 2001, sporting a round light or "bug-eye" fascia but this again did not sell very well. In a move to be more relevant to the SUV-oriented Philippine market the Legacy wagon was dropped from the lineup in favor of the Forester SUV model. The future of the marquee is sadly unclear in the Philippines despite its being very relevant to both Philippine roads and our "challenging" driving conditions.

(The Internet is a great source for Subaru info and history, but a great book on the Impreza and the brand in general was published by Veloce Publishing in 2003. The tome was written by Brian Long and has an interesting foreword by Subaru World Rally Team driver Toshihiro Arai.)

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MARCOS' wedding car parked side by side with Estrada's limo

Restoration . . .

From page C1

becomes more complicated. Painting cars, for example, can't be rushed.

"If there's a need to put primer, you need to find first uneven surfaces and put fillers *(masilya)*. You have to wait for weeks so this could dry, and then that's the only time you have to start working again."

Cito bargains for his cars. "There are some cars that really cost very high. Cars usually cost P50,000 to P60,000. That's my price range."

The Marcos, Quezon and Paredes cars were in dilapidated condition when Cito got hold of them. The Erap car, on the other hand, was in running condition. That car's body has been repaired and is now being repainted.

In order to finish work on his historical cars, Cito sometimes has to sell his other "toys," other cars that are not that historically significant.

Romantic significance

Cito cited an old Maserati, now owned by painter Ramon Diaz. The car has its romantic significance. Cito said this was the car Mike Arroyo used in wooing Gloria Macapagal. And did Mike desperately need that car.

Cito said Mike had two rivals for Gloria's heart: two mestizos from prominent clans. "*Pare guwapo sila. Ako naka-Maserati*," Arroyo was quoted as saying in Cito's TV program "Straight Talk."

The "*pogi points*" the Maserati accorded Mike was apparently enough.

Artist painter Ramon Diaz told the INQUIRER that Arroyo's heart-winning Maserati is a 3500GT 1957 model. It was actually a hardtop version and belonged to the first production batch. Only 1,972 of these were made.

The engine is still running and only needs finer detailing. Its motor engine is six-cylinder in line, bore and stroke 86 x 100 mm. Its piston displacement is 3,485.3 cc. Its max bhp is 220 (235) HP at 5,500 (5,800) rpm. Its dry weight 1,300 kilos. Its top speed is 240 kph.

Diaz was a classmate of Arroyo in Ateneo grade school. They used to drive from Manila to Pampanga via MacArthur highway. There was no North Luzon Expressway then.

"When Mike was about 17 or 18 years old, he would be driving it. I was also in a sports car, but it was a smaller car, an MGA. And he would overtake me as if I was parked," Diaz recounted. "I would go full speed at 140 kph, and this Maserati would pass me at about 200 kph," said Diaz with a laugh.

"We used to go to Pampanga because Ramon Jacinto and The Riots were playing there. That was a long trip, but that was the best highway." Diaz said that later on the Maserati would be bought by one of the Jacintos, who was married to Arroyo's sister Marilou. Later on, the Jacintos turned over a painting and the Maserati to Diaz.

"I think Mike would love to have it back for sentimental reasons," mused Diaz.

E-mail the author at tsalazar@inquirer.com.ph.

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+ BASED ON 2005 FIRST QUARTER SALES REPORT, CAMPI

KIA

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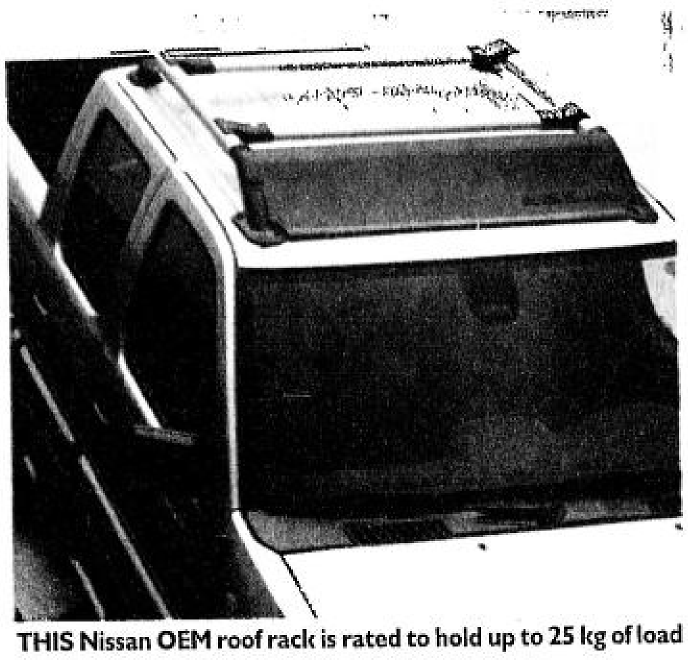
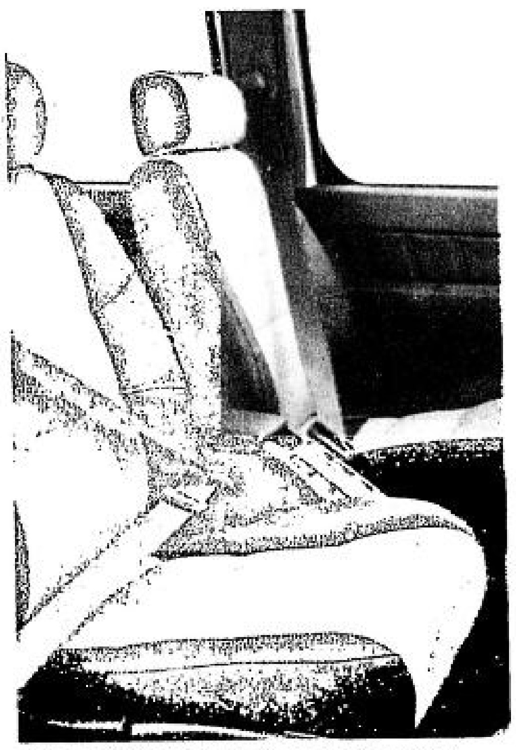


THIS Nissan OEM roof rack is rated to hold up to 25 kg of load

WITH the T3, UMC has made compact pickup competition even tougher

UMC ups the ante with Titanium 3

By Charles E. Buban



RACE-INSPIRED two-tone leather seats

WITH RADICALLY restyled body cladding along the side, new alloy wheel design and that unmistakable Nissan roof rack, Universal Motors Corp. has redesigned its Frontier Titanium pickup.

UMC.'s latest offering, the Titanium 3, T3 for short, will mark the company's renewed quest in strengthening its position in the country's compact pickup arena.

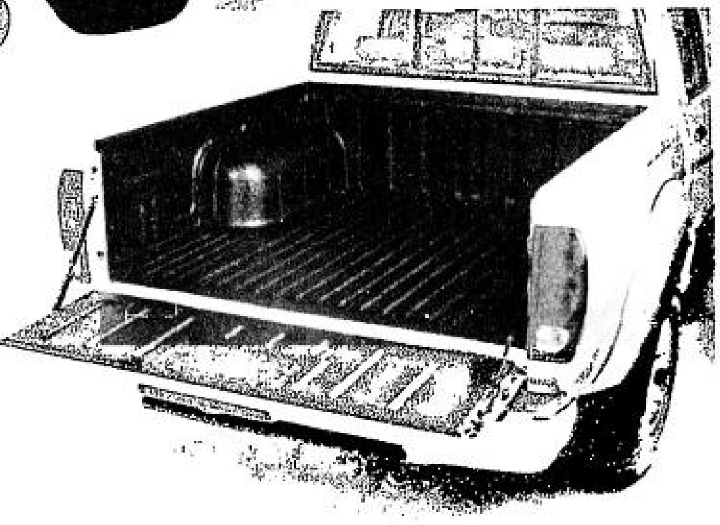
Unveiled last week at the UMC headquarters on Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City, the T3 possesses unique combination of attributes that promises to give its rivals a run for their money, according to Elizabeth Lee, UMC senior vice president for marketing.

Formidable competition

Positioned against formidable competition that includes Toyota's Hilux, Isuzu's D-Max, Ford's Ranger and Mitsubishi's L200 Strada, the T3 boasts a beefier and bolder design, new interior features and bigger engine displacement [the T3's automatic variant is powered by a 3.2-liter diesel engine].

Combine these qualities with its price—which starts at P930,000 [for the manual 2.7-liter variant]—the T3 certainly makes it stand out in this already competitive segment.

Improving on its predecessor's winning features, the T3 is wider by 110 mm and taller by 15 mm, and sports a higher ground clearance at 15 mm more.



SPRAYED-ON bed liner to protect against scratches and rust

Redesigned exterior

T3's redesigned exterior also includes the riveted fender flares and new tail lamp design, which when combined to the new cladding adds to T3's muscular stance.

Perhaps, the most noticeable improvement is the Nissan original equipment manufactured roof rack that according to UMC, is rated to hold up to 25 kg of load.

The T3 retains some of the winning features of its predecessor: side mirror LED signal lights, sprayed-on bedliner (protection from scratches and rust) and the rain sensor that automatically activates the wipers when rain starts hitting the windshield.

For added safety, the T3 is equipped with a driver's side SRS airbag, side-impact protection beams and child safety lock.

UMC's overall safety engineering conforms to Nissan's revolutionary Zone Body Concept, in which the passenger cabin is protected in a rigid safety zone while allowing crumple zones to disperse energy during collision.

Race-inspired seat design

Inside, UMC equipped the T3 with race-inspired two-tone leather seats that complement the pickup's sporty look.

An all-new Clarion audio system with MP3 player completes the fine amenities inside.

Lee explains that T3's improvements inside and out are meant to change the pickup's image of being just a dependable workhorse.

"Apart from being an all-around utility vehicle, a pickup should also carry its occupants in style and comfort," Lee said, adding that UMC is looking at selling 70 to 80 T3 units a month.

In fact, she is confident about hitting the target considering other Nissan counterparts in the Asean region are keenly looking at replicating what UMC has achieved with its Frontier Titanium series.

UMC, a Filipino-owned company, is the exclusive assembler and distributor of the T3 (along with other Nissan light commercial and recreational vehicles).

T3
TITANIUM
BIGGER. BOLDER. BETTER.
FRONTIER
exclusive Nissan OEM roof rack
body cladding
newly designed chrome alloy mags
Clarion audio system with MP3 player
new tail lamp design
race-inspired 2-tone leather seats

THE REBEL REBORN.
THE TITANIUM LEGACY LIVES ON
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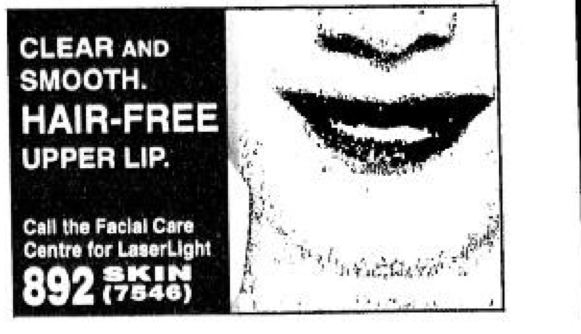
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2bU invades the mall *Part 1*

To be you!

SURE, we love the mall. But would we love the mall as much if we were going there to work? This week, read about our adventures as a TGIFriday's waiter, a Music One staffer, a Time Zone customer service agent, U.R.S. & Inc. shoe salesgirl and flyer distributor. Next week, we have stories from correspondents who experienced what it's like to be a topper and a cashier at Bread Talk, a beauty advisor at the Shu Uemura counter, a mall pianist, a PowerBooks customer service associate, a Big Chill staff member and a cinema attendant at the Ayala Cinemas.

People say there are times when you really need to step into other people's shoes to learn lessons about yourself and about the world. This is one of those times. And the big lesson? We need to be nicer to other people.

Stars in red and white stripes

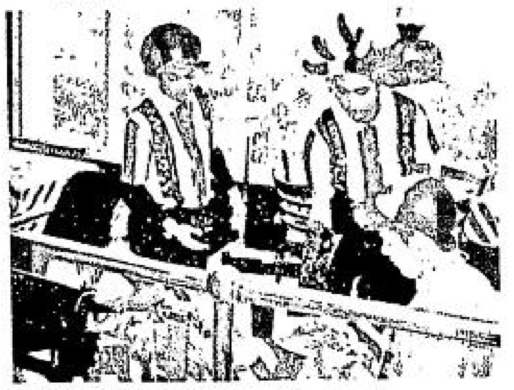
Text by Jason Doplito
Contributor
Photos by Rudy Esperas

YOU see TGIF, or more popularly known as Friday's, and you think of the dashing attendants in their red and white stripes. You see the waiters and you think without doubt that no other restaurant can have their employees get away with jester hats and sexy fishnet stockings than Friday's. (Please cross out girlie bar ideas.)

Dissecting a TGIF waiter's glowing popularity is like dissecting our current stable of young stars: attractive face, check; a desire to entertain, check; fancy costumes, check. The only difference perhaps, aside from pay and placard-bearing fans, is that the former can sing on key.

My first impression upon arriving at TGIF Glorietta at 10 a.m., an hour before it opened its doors to clients, was that the energy buzz felt like a Divisoria weekend. The staff were donning their uniforms in military-speed precision, cooks prepared the food ingredients amid gleaming cauldrons, and supervisors gave out instructions left and right. The air was so thick with energy and pressure for a novice like me that it felt like Friday's famous chocolate mud pie.

STRUGGLING with the hot plate


SERVING like a pro

I was given my uniform: the shirt with red and white stripes, a black apron, and two pieces of red cloth folded into long strips, to be used when serving hot plates. The latter were tucked behind the pants, over the belt loop. The complete get-up included a white undershirt, black slacks, black shoes with rubber soles, belt bag and jumper. An eccentric hat and a minimum of 30 button pins made up the required accessories.

Overall, this was a stark contrast from the uniform of TGIF waiters in the US, which only consisted of blue shirt and jeans, as I learned from the official company website.

It probably took me 20 minutes to prepare as I had trouble deciding how to pin my Blues Clues doggie, red and white boxing glove, and extra long New Orleans-like beads. I eventually decided not to use any altogether as I didn't want to be late for the initial meeting—the day's first pep talk, which included a post-mortem of last day's earnings, plus bits on current problems (mostly food items not available for the morning), the sales target for the month and the introduction of a new staff member—in this case, me.

Tradition

It's TGIF tradition that new waiters introduce themselves by showcasing their talent. My talent is twofold: writing and taming my hair 20 minutes before an appointment. Clearly, I wouldn't be able to demonstrate these in front of the adoring staff. "*Walisin mo mula dito hanggang* Edsa," one suggested.

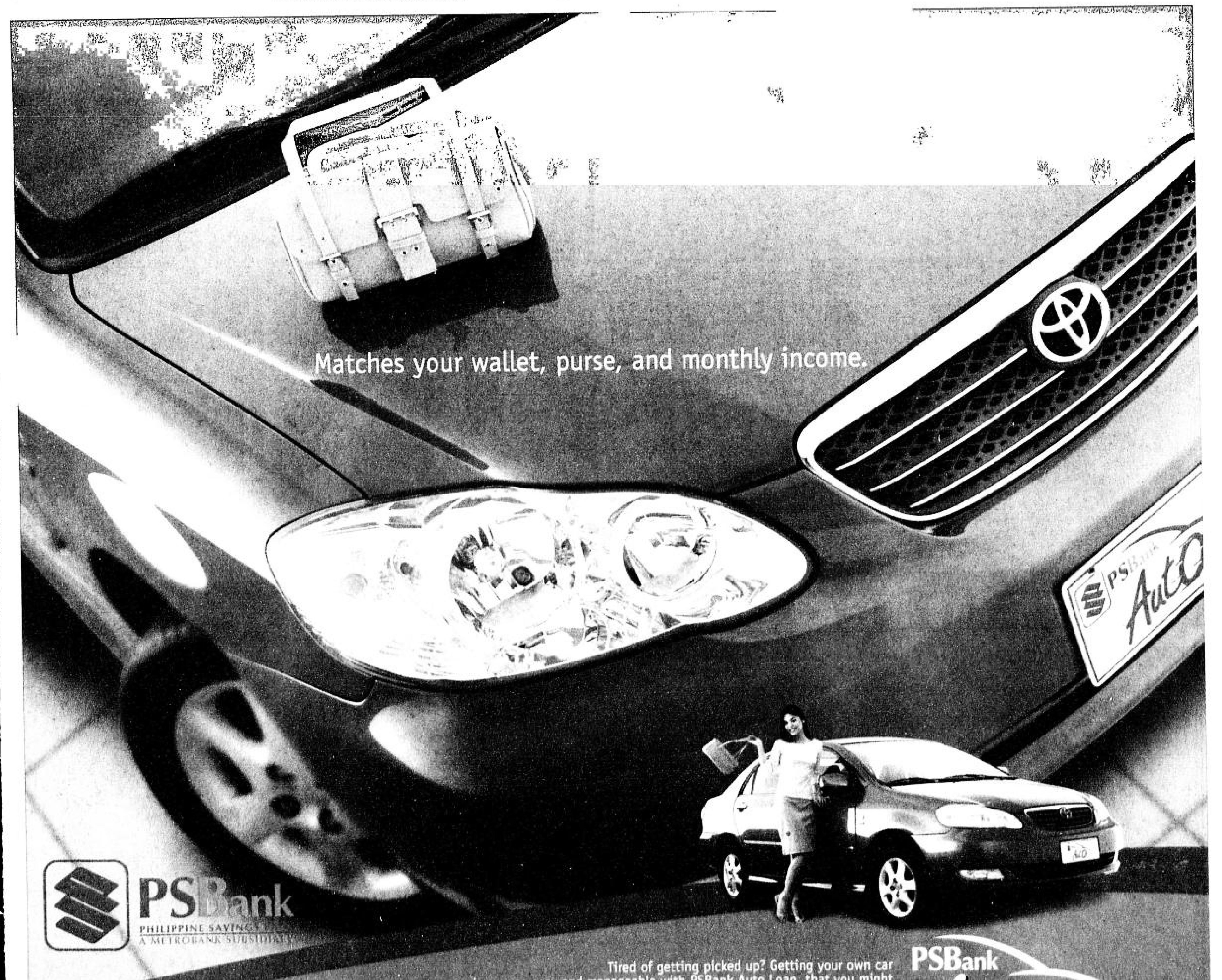
HANDS down, Batman wins best in costume. The writer with TGIF staff members

TAKE a pick. Fries, salad or me?

Cliff, my buddy for the day, toured me around the restaurant. He's one of the "key employees," a term for those who have achieved supervisory status, having been with Friday's for several years—10 years in his case.

Once in a while, other staff would approach him to have their uniform checked, and this reminded me of my ROTC days. "You have to be tough with them sometimes," he explained to me later, perhaps referring to those who may once in a while forget to bring required items. Cliff also checks the contents of their belt bag—coins for small change, a notepad and at least three lighters and three pens: one for the waiter's use, one to lend to customers and another to lose. (I hope this does not promote the idea of customers not returning borrowed pens, as the staff pro-

STARS/ D2



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Thank you for the music

Text by Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Rudy Esperas

WHEN I enlisted for a one-day job at a music store, I thought I'd end up standing the whole day, leading customers to their desired compact discs. Surprisingly, that never happened during my short stint as a staff member of Music One in Greenbelt.

Wearing a crisp, fresh black shirt with the Music One logo stitched on the sleeves, I first familiarized myself with the whole place, making sure I knew the locations of CDs according to genre. Afterwards, I made sure items were in their proper places and that they were in abundance.

Since it was a Saturday, I expected people to come in barangays, but not a lot of people went to the store a little after its 11 a.m. opening. Which was good for me since I had some time to check out CD covers and update myself with new releases.

It was at lunch time when people started to fill the place. Curving my mouth into the smile of all smiles, I projected my most accommodating persona, hoping customers would approach me if ever they needed assistance.

HEY MR. DJ. The author at the listening station

Around 30 minutes passed without anybody getting near me. There was this cute American boy who almost went near me, but quickly asked another Music One staff member for help. I later realized that despite my uniform, I didn't have an ID which instantly separated staff from customers.

REMOVING the "safers" isn't as easy as it looks.

At Music One, I learned to be in sync with the demands of customers

Feeling useless, I instead went around in search of shoplifters. No success. Challenged and wanting to be of some sort of service, I almost tried to annoy customers by pretending to be their shadow. And then I remembered how salespeople who do that annoy me, so I didn't. I just asked store manager Rodilyn Alcira for something else to do.

Bagger boy

And so I found myself at the cash register, thankfully as a bagger and not as a cashier (I'm afraid of running out of money and giving the wrong change). I thought it would be a piece of cupcake, but it was actually challenging since before the actual bagging, I first needed to take out "safers" from the merchandise. "Safers" are those plastic thingies that make items go beep beep when you go near the exits.

WORKING in a music store is fun but serious work.

THE AUTHOR with the Music One staff

What made it extra challenging was when there's lots of CDs and the "safers" required a ballpen to help the machine remove them. Yet another challenge was quickly stapling the plastic bag before the customer dies of impatience. When I got possessed by boredom, I requested for another task from the manager.

At the listening station

And so Ms Alcira led me to a certain portion of the store called the listening station. While samplers are scattered all throughout Music One, the listening station is where customers can check out CDs not included in the samplers. The store has three CD players, but I was asked to man only two.

Here's the typical scenario: a customer approaches me with CD/s. I remove the "safers," I carefully take out (not destroy) the plastic covering, and pop in the CD for the customers to listen to. When the customer is done, I return the CD into its case, put back the case into the right plastic covering with the right price sticker and attach the "safer." I put it in a bin if the customer decides the CD is unworthy of hard-earned cash. If the CD is ordered, I hand it to the customer or get a brand new one with fresh plastic covering.

What made the listening station an extra challenge was when curious customers lined up with a whole stack of CDs. It was especially chaotic when they wanted me to instantly change CDs. But after an hour of doing the same thing again and again, I got the hang of it and actually liked it.

The job: Music One staff

The good:

- Music all day long!!! Even if the DJ isn't playing your favorite album, he's sure to always play something ear-friendly.
- Weird, fabulous, interesting, visually-pleasing customers. It's a plus when their taste in music turns out applause-worthy.
- Lovely uniform. It might be just plain black, but it's very classy and simple. Not attention-grabbing. Something that won't trigger customers to giggle or roll eyes.

The bad:

- Bitchy customers
- Impatient customers
- Ungrateful customers

Lessons learned

A slot in a music store requires the basic stuff from wannabes: diligence, focus and hard work. For someone to be effective in a store such as Music One, one should be O.C. and organized, alert and approachable, plus willing to multitask. Being updated in the music scene is a must. How can you help customers locate CDs if you don't know the artists or the album titles that they are pertaining to, right?

At the end of my experience (not the shift, since I seriously couldn't stay till 12 midnight), I realized that while working at a music store is lots of fun, it also involves serious work. More important, I realized that work can be more fulfilling and less of a load if you do it with all your heart and have fun at the same time. These realizations wouldn't have been possible if I didn't OJT'd at Music One. I didn't need to experience it myself (although I did). Observing my co-workers for a day was enough.

In the ZONE

Text by Vanessa Arellano Doctor
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Rudy Esperas

I WOKE up Saturday with such a stiff neck that I almost didn't show up. But later on, between 2-9 p.m., I didn't feel anything. Working as a customer service agent at Time Zone Glorietta 4 kept me preoccupied enough to will the pain away.

The first few minutes doing the numerous counter jobs had me fumbling embarrassingly. Luckily, even with two people short, center manager Rowena Minggoy was able to guide me through the ins and outs. At Time Zone, there are basically three jobs: cashiering, assist roving and prize redemption.

Cashiers are ideally not allowed to work on anything else, due to their task's sensitive nature. CSAs assigned to do assist roving are out on the floor, checking if customers need help with the games or have complaints, and making sure all machines are in working order.

I found my niche in prize redemption. Who would turn down the experience of seeing kids light up at the sight of their loot? However, for this task, you had to be open-minded. Some customers were nice and patient (especially to "newcomers" like me), but there were those who took an unbelievably long time to make up their minds which prize to get. Even worse were the few who looked down on you and thought you were a lesser person.

Through all this, you had to have a big, accommodating smile on your face. Yes. Even if you were dealing with a complaint. There's no slouching, no looking fatigued, no looking bored allowed. The other CSAs told me they eventually got used to it.

From working with them, I've realized that Time Zone employees are some of the friendliest, calmest and most helpful people there are. From the other side of the counter, it might look like their job is a no-brainer. But having experienced it myself, I can say it's definitely no walk in the park.

For this job, you have to have a sunny outlook in life, a high level of endurance and a really comfortable pair of shoes.

The job: Customer service agent at Time Zone

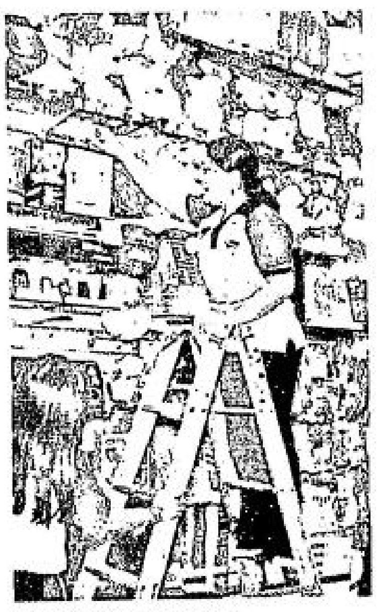
The good:

- Each employee carries a Staff Card, which allows them to play for free.
- The camaraderie is great. Everyone's friends with everyone!
- You learn how to deal with all sorts of people. It teaches you to be more patient, enduring and positive.

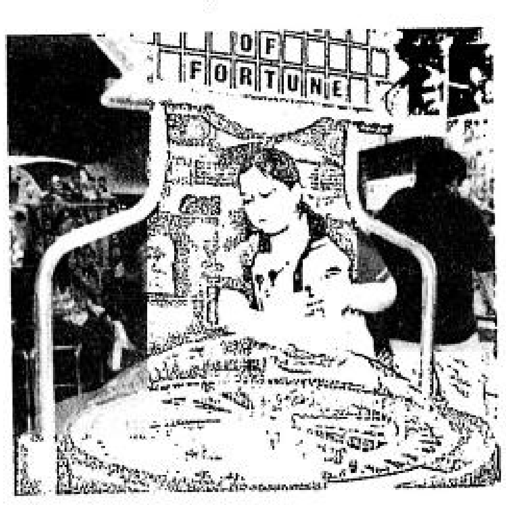
The bad:

- Standing for eight hours straight (excluding the one-hour break) and having to look chipper all the time.
- Dealing with customers who think less of you. (Note: I don't really get this. Having more money or looking like you have money does not give you the license to boss people around and treat them as if they carry diseases. Get educated, people!)
- Everyone has to report on weekends and sometimes take opening to closing shifts (meaning, from around 9:30 a.m.-1:30 a.m. the next day). When somebody absents himself from work, the task doubles (naturally).

ACTION behind the counter


MANNING the prize redemption area is a joy.

EIGHT hours and still standing. The writer at Time Zone Glorietta


CLEANING the games

Stars in red and white stripes

PREPARING the table setting

From page D1

vides them with their own money.)

As Friday's is a fairly large restaurant, it was a challenge to memorize the table numbers, particularly because they were not arranged in a seemingly logical order. You had one row of 40s, but the middle table was assigned an "800" number because 45 proved to be very inauspicious in the past. Other rows jumped from the tenths to the hundreds for reasons only management could tell.

Cliff said the waiters were also required to memorize three items each in the drinks, appetizers, entrées and dessert categories, the better for them to recommend choice items to customers. This saves clients the trouble of having to decide from such a wide array of choices.

Eye contact

As soon as we opened our doors, families, *barkadas*, expats and couples immediately streamed in. From 20 ft away, we had to be able to establish eye contact with newly arrived customers and give them a nod or a smile. At five to 10 ft before us, we must greet them with a "good afternoon" or "thank you for choosing Friday's." Thirty seconds after they are seated, we must have approached them and recommended them our drink special.

Appetizers should arrive at their table in 10 minutes, entrées in at least 15, and dessert—ah, how could I remember! Checks should be given to them in three minutes.

It was very pleasing to work with customers who had a ready smile and called me by my first name. One lady with cute curls who was following up her order did so in a calm voice and gently explained to me what she wanted. Others were generous with their "thank you's" and made me feel as if they were honored with my service—though truth be told, the honor was certainly ours.

At the other end of the spectrum were customers who were less than pleasant. (All opinions expressed in the succeeding sentences are mine alone and not shared by the good waiters I worked with that day.) I noticed that some customers gave out fake smiles, which would lose steam and turn into grumpy scowls seconds after, with a head-to-toe once-over to boot. One had a patronizing tone that was a direct attack on my ego. Others absolutely ignored me when I greeted them, as if I did not exist—a completely unacceptable way to treat people in this business, or any other industry for that matter, if you ask me.

I can understand customers who are in a bad mood, perhaps because of stressful matters in their personal lives, or the rather long wait for their orders, but to completely ignore our when we're doing our be was disappointing for me.

CHOCO choco clap, clap. Song and dance numbers are a birt staple.

No complaints

But I suppose part of responsibilities was to

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Promo girl for a day

After distributing flyers and being ignored from time to time, I gained newfound respect for people who actually do this for a living

THE AUTHOR (center) with the other promo girls and boys

By Angela V. Ignacio
2bU! Correspondent

WHEN my sister and I were out shopping, a flyer distributor handed me a sheet. I automatically held up a hand and said no thanks. "Ba't hindi mo kinuha?" my sister chided me. "They can't go home unless they give out everything." "Eh kasi," I started to say, but trailed off. I thought of all the times when I'd pass by these people in a rush to get home, and how I'd refuse them (politely, I might add) or pretend to be busy so I wouldn't have to look at them.

But how would I feel if I were in their shoes?

Wanting to teach myself a lesson, I volunteered to be a "flyer girl" as my mall job for a day.

My task was to distribute promo postcards of Peque Gallaga's avant-garde flick, "Pinoy/Blonde," starring Epy and Boy2 Quizon. The target market was mainly teenagers and the "War Of The Worlds" audiences. All I had to do was smile, hand out the postcards, and perhaps explain a little about the film if needed. Piece of cake, I thought smugly.

Work site

Then I looked down at my stack: Five hundred postcards. Boy, was I glad I wore sneakers that day. "So, which mall do you want? You can choose from SM Centerpoint, SM Manila and SM Southmall," Princh, my boss for the day, asked me. "Southmall," my sleep-deprived brain answered. The others looked at me strangely, as I've just told them earlier that I lived in the Ortigas area.

Why in the world did I choose the farthest mall from the lot? 1) So I wouldn't bump into my friends and distract me from my job. 2) So I wouldn't bump into my classmates and be asked why I wasn't in school (less likely, but still possible). 3) So I wouldn't bump into anyone I know, period.

Moments later, we all piled in a vehicle and sped towards our drop-off points. Excusing myself from the lively chatter, I whipped out my handouts to study, or at least attempt at it. But when I realized that memorizing structures of amino acids in a bus full of jolly people was close to futile, I readily gave up and joined in.

This being the last day of promotions, the team already knew what to do and what to expect. All of the volunteers were either fresh grads or college kids who wanted to earn a quick buck while having fun. I was curious to know if there were any horror stories or weird encounters that they've had while on the job. None so far, they told me; sure, there were some who flat-out ignore them, and few who actually return the flyers, but that's about it. Do they really have to stand there until every flyer's been handed out, without any breaks in between? They all nodded, but judging from the easy banter and eager smiles on their faces, they didn't mind it at all.

Four hours later, I found myself in the middle of nowhere. Well, actually we were in Las Piñas, but for a denizen of the central district, the deep south was as close to the middle of nowhere as one could get.

Kel, my partner, and I hopped out and gave ourselves an hour to distribute the postcards near the theaters since our driver had to be back to the Unitel office soon. Because I was a newbie, Kel gave the two "War Of The Worlds" theaters for me to man, and luckily the film showings were about to end. So I stood there with the most gracious grin I could muster, and waited for the crowds to spill out of the theatres.

At work

Maybe it was because of my winning smile, or because the crowds had already gotten wind of the hype surrounding the movie, people interested got interested, and soon the first half of my stack was gone.

There were even times when I didn't have to offer the cards; groups of people would flock around me and get one each. Some used the postcards to fan themselves, others glanced perfunctorily at them and stuffed them in their bags. But the most common reaction I got was, "Ay, akala ko pa naman passes!" (Probably because the postcards were so well-made that they actually looked more like premiere passes than flyers.) But thankfully, they didn't return them.

On the other hand, I did get more than my fair share of N.R. (No Reaction) moments from indifferent passersby. Pretty soon I lost count of the number of times I said, "Excuse me, please get one, it's a really nice movie!" with people walking away mid-sentence.

Forcing yourself to look cheerful while continually being ignored really was a horrible feeling. No matter how friendly I was or how attractive the postcards were, some people just didn't care.

There was this one instance where I approached a girl around my age, and I was about to hand one out to her but she waved her hand dismissively, much like I usually did. Talk about déjà vu.

Lesson learned

Close to 7 p.m., I was beginning to feel anxious because I needed to catch my ride back to Makati, or else I'd have to find my way back on my own. I decided to leave the last few postcards I had at the ticket booths; this way, other moviegoers would be able to get one as they bought their tickets. Soon, I was on my way back home—tired, hungry, with sore calf muscles and a sort-of bruised ego.

Thinking back on that experience, I realized that I was lucky to have gotten a relatively easy job. While it wasn't the exact one I had in mind, I was glad (and more than a little guilty) that it went okay, despite the fact that it actually took me longer to get there than to do the job itself. It helped a lot that my promo shirt was cool and the cardboard postcards were quite striking, which attracted curious passersby.

But while I was doing it, I couldn't help but feel sorry for those people who literally have to stand all day at the same spot, handing out flimsy flyers and being ignored all the time. At the same time, I gained newfound respect for them, and I applaud them for having the patience and stamina to do this kind of job. Next time, whenever I'd pass by these people, I'd think twice about ignoring them and instead accept the flyers they hand out to me. After all, how hard can *that* be?

E-mail the author at aoshi_no_miko@atenista.net.

The job: Flyer distributor

The good:
- Having cheerful team members who are my age, getting paid to do almost nothing and being able to practice my people skills.

The bad:
- Being ignored.

Mga Usapang Peque

IT'S TIME to talk about Pinoy films with one of the most acclaimed Filipino filmmakers, Peque Gallaga, who will visit schools for a series of film fora on his latest film, "Pinoy/Blonde." Catch the talented Mr. Gallaga at these schools: Today, 4:30 p.m., at Ateneo de Manila University's Escaler Hall, and 7:30 p.m. at College of St. Benilde's Augusto Rosalio Auditorium; and on July 12, 4 p.m. at the University of the Philippines Diliman's Ishmael Bernal Gallery at the UP Film Institute. Admission is free.

PEQUE Gallaga

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waiter's
placate

stressed-out customers. I heard no complaints from the wonderful staff I worked with as they were all in a good mood and traded jokes with each other. Some of them have been with the company for at least 9 years, so they must be truly enjoying the rewards as well as the challenges that come with the turf.

I spent eight hours in the restaurant, with a one-hour lunch break. A normal shift was six hours of work with a 30-minute break. Other quick and welcome breaks included making small talk with kids, taking photos of large, happy *barkadas* and conniving with a customer to surprise a birthday celebrant with a song number. Overall, it felt good to be a TGIF waiter, and be popular if only for a day.

E-mail the author at jason_2bu@yahoo.com

The job: TGIFriday's waiter

The good:
- Good money. As families and expats frequent Friday's, tips can get fairly attractive. Waiters get to keep them on top of their regular salary and money pooled from the service charge.
- Uniform. Boring outfits are a big no-no.
- Colleagues. Some of them can be very funny. One refused to speak and be spoken to in Tagalog because he said he was from Spain. He asked me if he could give me his resumé because he'd like to write a naughty column for this paper.
- Customer relations. Some have made friends with regular patrons. Also, it's nice to make small talk with customers, kids most especially.
- The Birthday Song. What's happier than being able to share a special occasion with a guest? And what better way to poke fun at oneself than singing "Follow the Leader" and "Chocolate (A Choco Choco)"?
- Food. Ey, it's Friday's!

The bad:
- Unhappy feet. First hour, and my feet and legs were already whimpering in pain. Second hour, and they wailed and wailed and wailed. After eight hours, they were dead.
- Losing pens. It would piss me off if customers don't return my pen.

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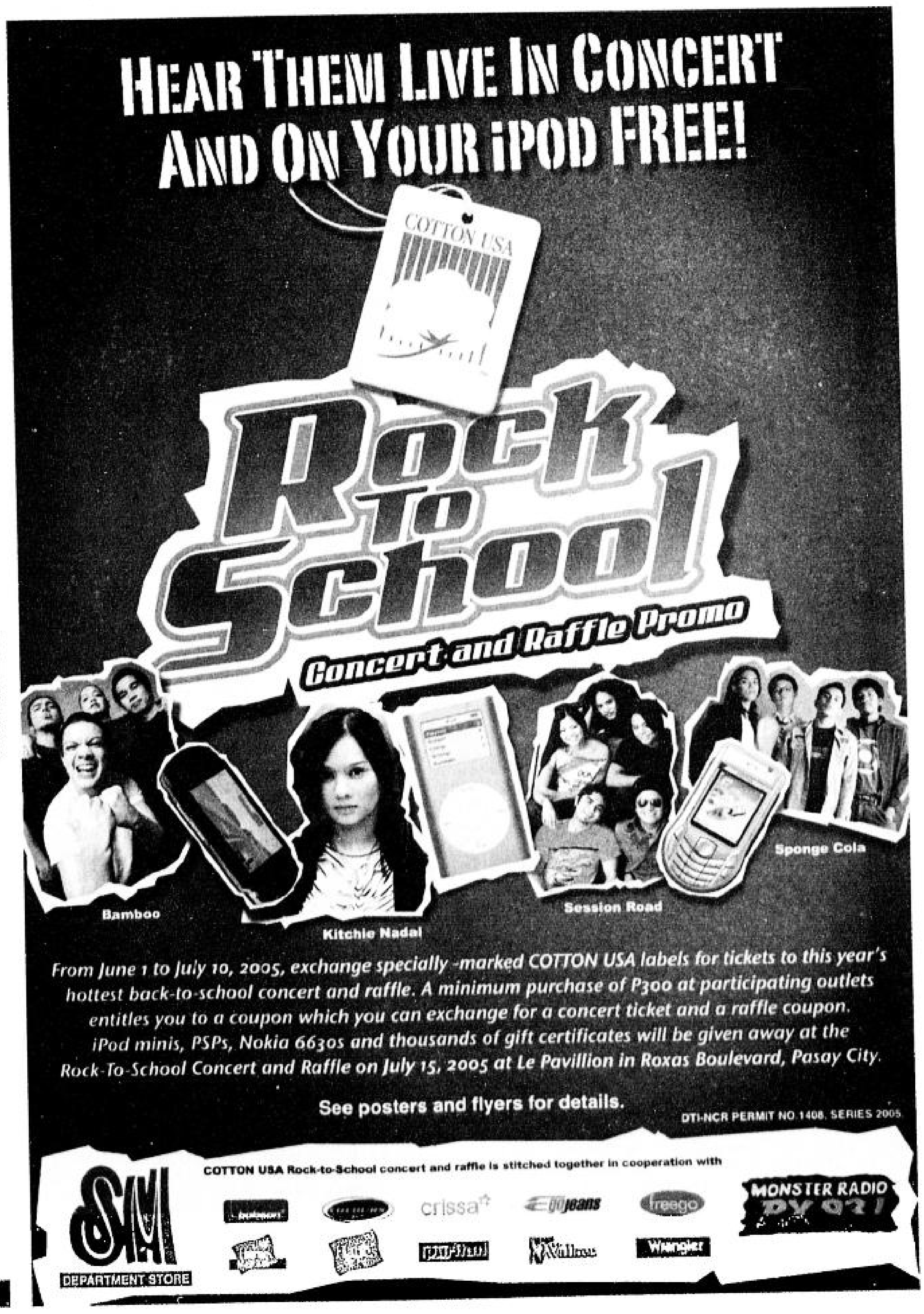
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FANS of the "Sandman" series—"Neverwhere," "American Gods," "Coraline" and "Stardust," etc.—can mark their calendars for world-renowned author Neil Gaiman's first-ever Manila visit from July 9-11!

Fully Booked, with Smart Communications, Inc., and Chikka.com, presents this three-day series of events: "The Gathering" and book-signing at the Rockwell Tent, Powerplant Mall at 3 p.m. on July 9; book-signing at Fully Booked Promenade, Greenhills Shopping Center, 2 p.m, on July 10 and Press Conference and Writers' Forum at the Music Museum, 1:30 p.m. (organized by the British Council Manila, strictly by invitation), and book-signing at Fully Booked Gateway, 4 p.m. on July 11.

Get book signing passes with every purchase of a Neil Gaiman title from Fully Booked, Bibliarch or Sketchbooks from June 15-July 11.

Neil Gaiman will choose the three winning entries of the art contest. The first prize includes dinner with Neil Gaiman on July 11. Each contestant must submit only one entry to the marketing manager of Fully Booked.

Visit Fully Booked at Powerplant Mall (7565001 to 04) and Booked, Gateway Mall, in Cubao (9114960 or 913 45430)

For more information, call the Neil Gaiman Hotline at 8980283, or visit groups.yahoo.com/group/gaiman_fullybooked/

P8.50 PA RIN
ANG PINAKALAKAS NA TUSERAN
TUSERAN FORTE
DEXTROMETHOR
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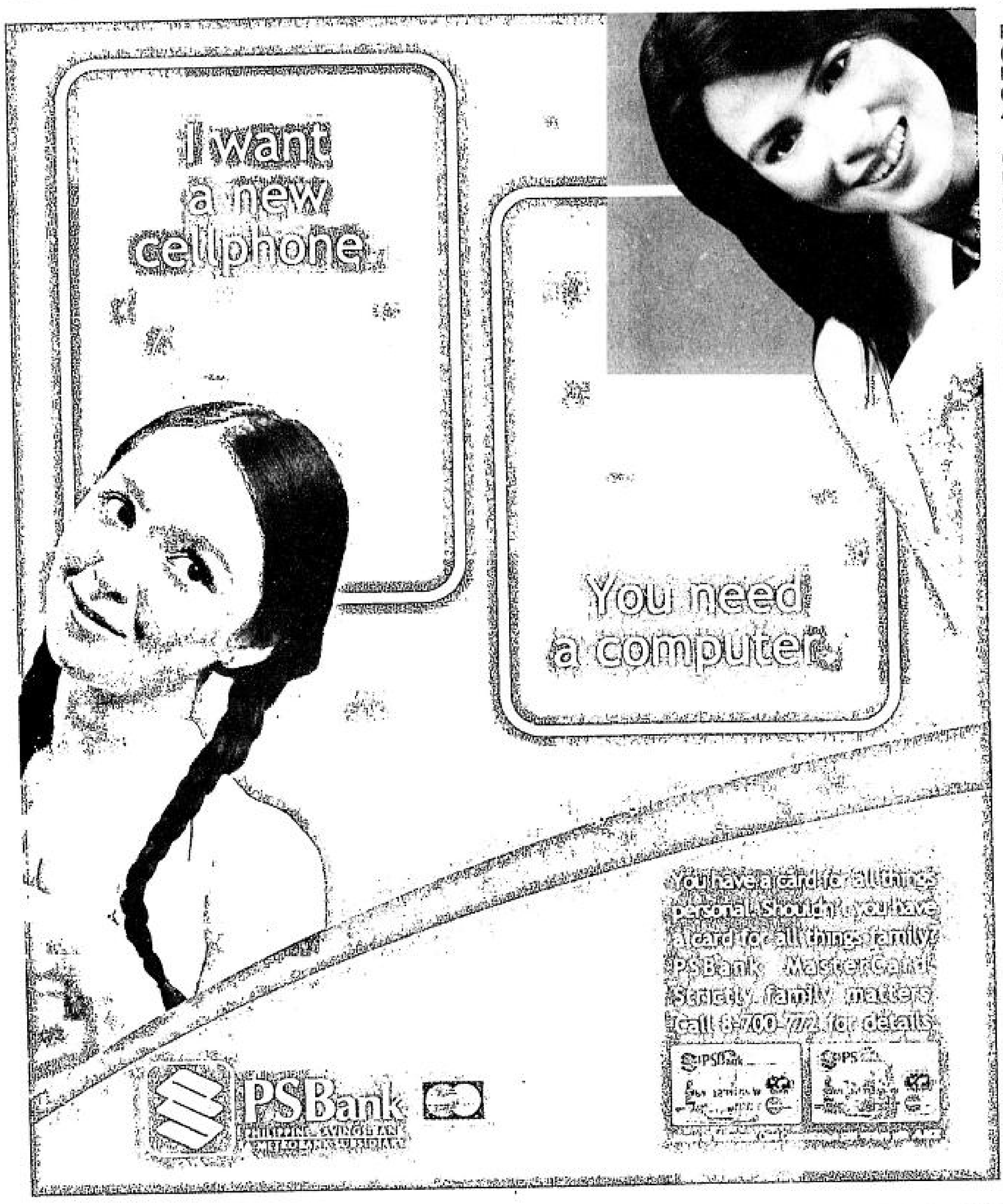
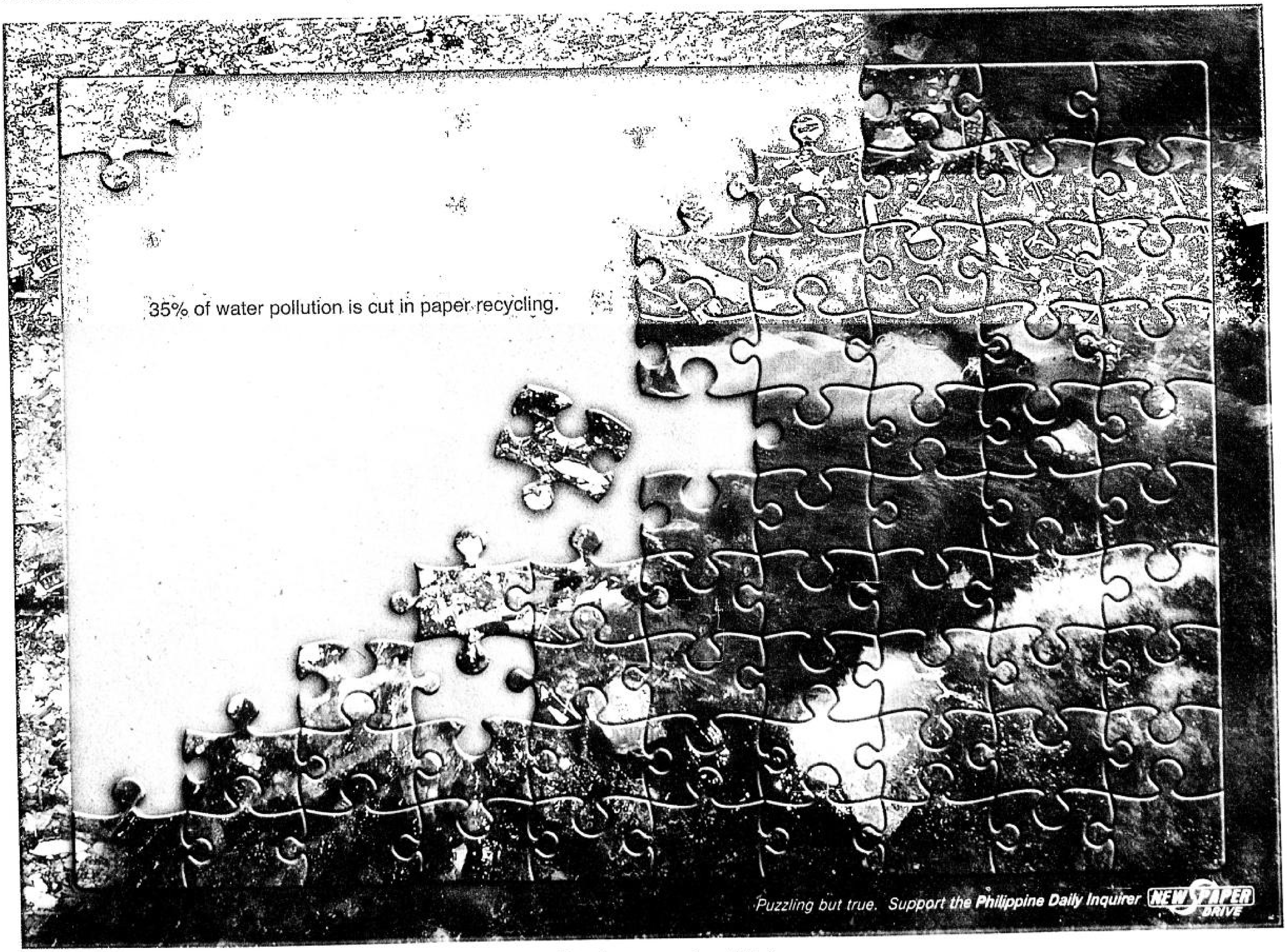
PARAC
TUSERAN
If symptoms persist


I want a new cellphone
You need a computer
You have a card for all things personal. Shouldn't you have a card for all things family? PSBank MasterCard. Strictly family matters. Call 8-700-772 for details.
PSBank

BRIGHT CHILD
NGAYON PA LANG, ASIKASO NA NG PAMILYA, GUBYERNO AT LIPUNAN.
KAMI... MGA BATANG MAY FUTURE KAMI ANG PAG ASA NG BAYAN
A public service announcement from the
Department of Social Welfare and Development,
Department of Education, Department of Health, and Council for the Welfare of Children


35% of water pollution is cut in paper recycling.
Puzzling but true. Support the Philippine Daily Inquirer NEWSPAPER DRIVE

Water pollution creates tidal waves

We are in an era where industrialization is ever pertinent. Pollution seems to be an unavoidable consequence. Among other earth resources, our various water forms are falling victim to pollution.

But we can do our share in protecting our waters via paper recycling. Unlike in processing new paper where bleaching is necessary, recycling reduces the need for this chemical procedure since paper is just being reused. This saves water forms from being polluted and minimizes risk of groundwater contamination. What is preserved is a valuable future.

You can be one in saving our waters through the NewPaper Drive. Now on its fifth year, this Inquirer recycling campaign aims to make a difference in the environment together with the whole nation.

Linis Ganda, Inquirer's partner in making a difference in the environment, will pick-up old newspapers and tabloids for FREE within Metro Manila. For inquiries, call Winnie or Michelle at 410-0383 or 448-7835. For pick-ups, call CARPEL Office at 430-0656 or 430-8411 and look for Weng, Lorrie or Myra. Pick-ups are from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm on weekdays, from June 25 to October 25, 2005.

Interested individuals may also drop off their newspapers and tabloids at the different Inquirer offices. In Manila: FEP Printing Press loading dock; 3817 Mascardo St. (behind the Inquirer building) Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City. Tel. No. 8974386 local 2160. Contact Person: Adrian Cruz. In Laguna: Printtown Bldg. Mamplasan, Biñan, Laguna. Tel. No. 8974386 local 2158. Contact Person: Adrian Cruz. In Cebu: FEP Printing Press, Warehouse #1, Menzo Compound National Highway, Pajo, Lapu Lapu City. Tel. No. (032) 3407970 to 71. Contact Person: Lenny Brua. In Davao: FEP Printing Press loading dock, Brgy. Ma-A, Ma-A Road, Davao City. Tel. No. (082) 844-1711 to 12. Contact Person: Rowena Balandra.

FEP will receive newspapers from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays in Makati, Wednesdays and Fridays in Laguna and weekdays in Cebu and Davao. Sellers will be paid P5.00 per kilo. Fit into this picture perfectly by selling us your old newspapers and tabloids of any kind now.

LINIS-GANDA

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AT THE stockroom

It's shoe time

Being one of them for a day helped me learn to appreciate shoe salesgirls more

By Marla Miniano
2bU! Correspondent

MY FRIEND burst out laughing when I told her I would be working as a shoe salesgirl for a day. I bet you wouldn't even last 30 minutes, she said. I gave her my best haughty, I-am-above-this-situation glare, trying (and failing) to convince myself that I was going to be okay.

I thought of all the poor salesgirls I had inadvertently harassed every time I would enter a shoe store, look around, ask for my size, try on a few pairs, ask if they have other colors, and end up not buying anything (and of course, leaving behind a huge mess of shoes and boxes). Well, I was in for some karma.

I didn't want to back out, though, and somewhere inside me, I kept hoping the experience would be a positive one. So on a seemingly normal Friday morning, I dragged myself over to U.R.S. & Inc. in Megamall, just in time for the shop's opening. I paused outside the swanky shoe store, hesitating. After what felt like an hour, my curiosity finally got the better of me. And I'm sure glad it did.

Singapore brand

U.R.S. & Inc. (meaning unique and reliable quality shoes) is a Singapore-based brand catering mostly to females 20-40 years old. Styled after big brands Nine West, Gap and Zara, its products are surprisingly pocket-friendly (P1,300-P2,700 for shoes, P2,000-P4,000 for bags). I immediately fell in love with a pair of girly pink ballerina pumps, but that's another story.

As I entered the store, the salesgirl on duty greeted me pleasantly. I gave her a big smile in return, noticing that she was wearing almost exactly the same outfit I had on—a pale-green polo and dark slacks. It was amusing because I didn't even know what the store's prescribed uniform looked like!

I introduced myself to the girl, who told me her name was Mina and invited me to sit down while waiting for Joy, the sales and marketing manager. "Ma'am, *terno pa po tayo*," she added, grinning. "*Oo nga* eh," I replied, immediately at ease.

My job was fairly simple: Greet the customers when they walk in, dish out some fashion advice (classic lines like "Ma'am, *bagay po sa inyo 'yan*," or "Ma'am, *'yan po ang* latest style *namin*"), go to the stock room if they ask for their sizes, offer assistance when they try something on, lead them to the cashier if they do decide to buy, and bid them goodbye cheerfully when they step out—regardless of whether they purchased something or was friendly toward you.

I was half-expecting several celeb sightings (Joy said Mel Tiangco and Claudine Barretto were on their list of famous customers), but I encountered my share of non-showbiz yet interesting personalities instead. While most of the customers were the typical pretty, power-dressed career women, there were some who broke the norm. There was this sweet guy

IT'S SHOE/ E3

WORKING on the computer

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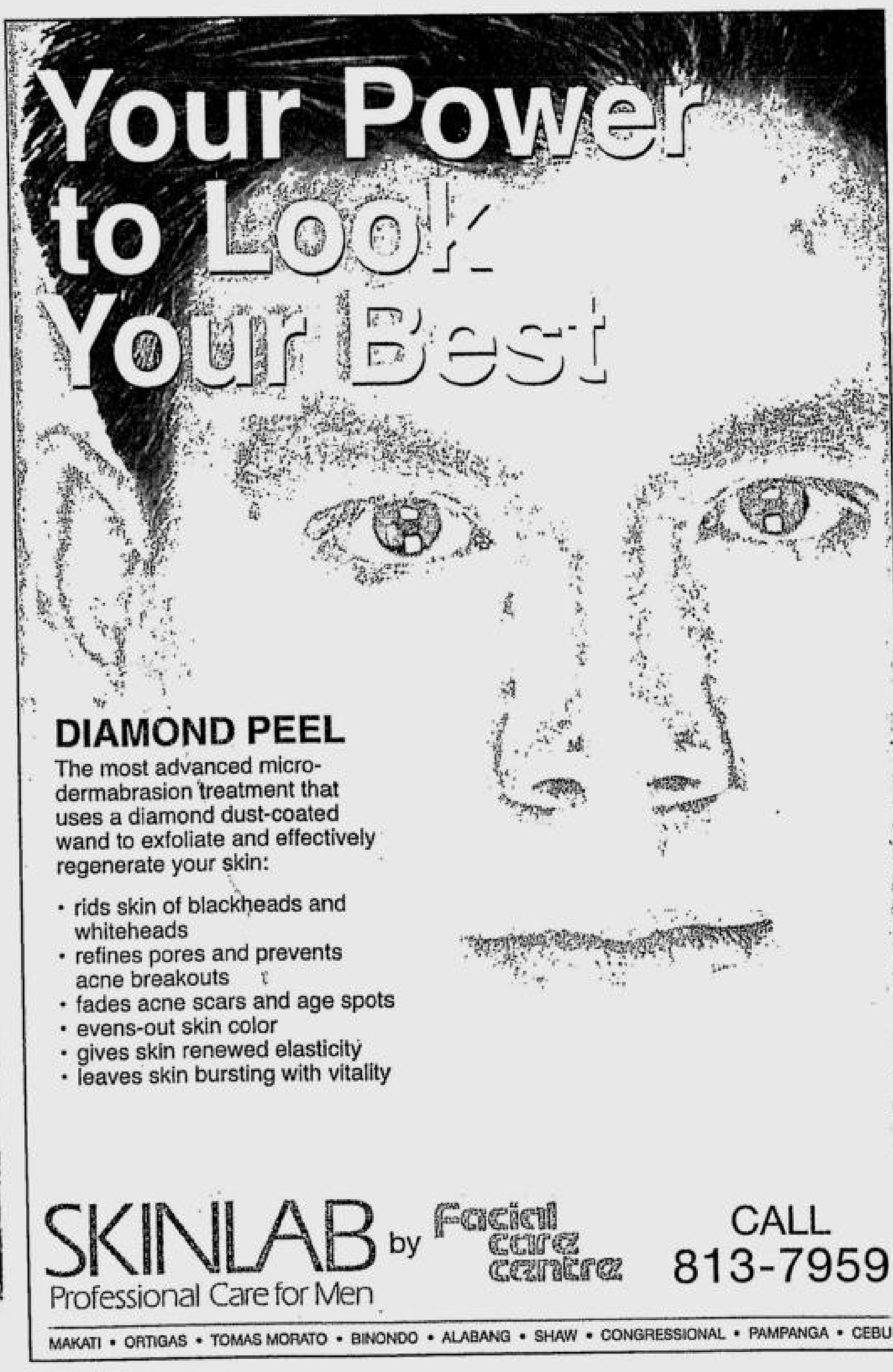

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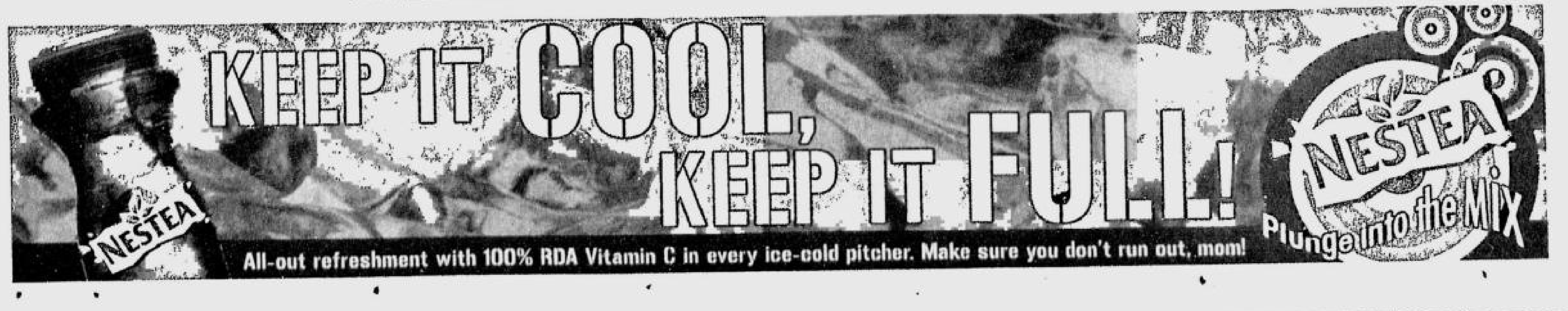
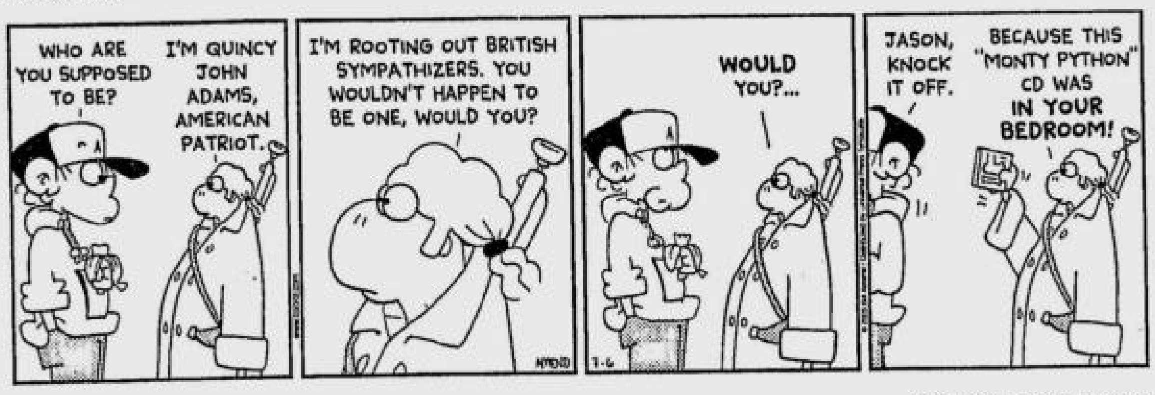


All-out refreshment with 100% RDA Vitamin C in every ice-cold pitcher. Make sure you don't run out, mom!

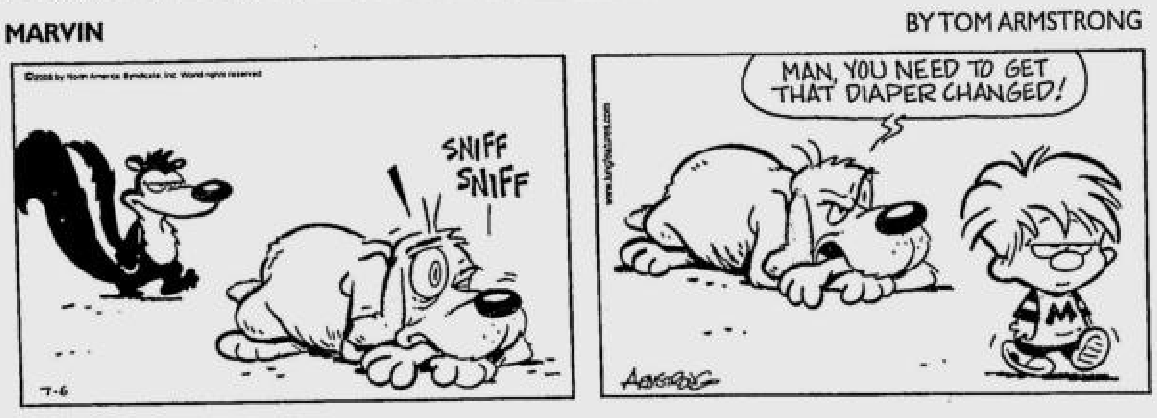
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHO ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE?
I'M QUINCY JOHN ADAMS, AMERICAN PATRIOT.
I'M ROOTING OUT BRITISH SYMPATHIZERS. YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO BE ONE, WOULD YOU?
WOULD YOU?...
JASON, KNOCK IT OFF.
BECAUSE THIS "MONTY PYTHON" CD WAS IN YOUR BEDROOM!
7-6

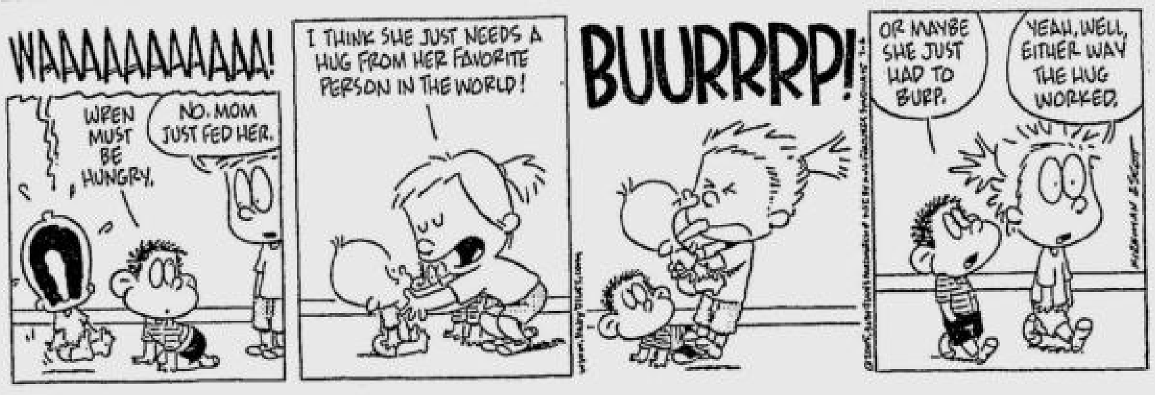
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


SNIFF SNIFF
MAN, YOU NEED TO GET THAT DIAPER CHANGED!
7-6

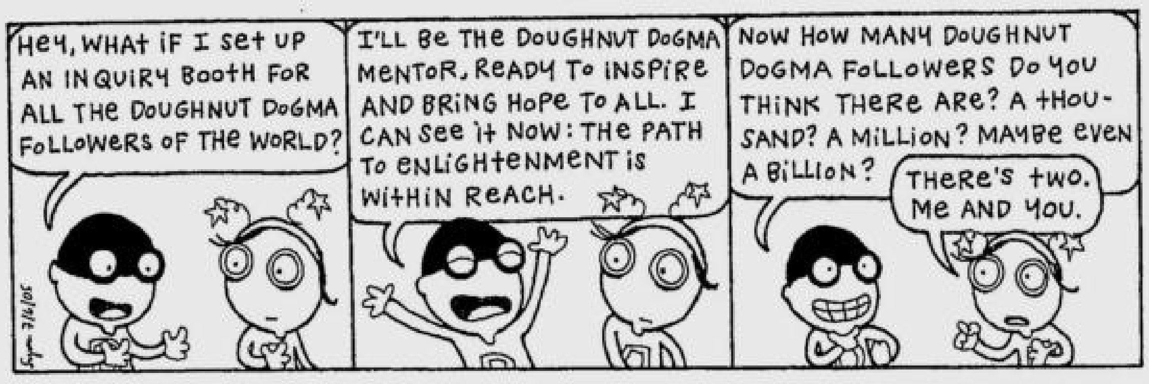
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WAAAAAAAAAAA!
WREN MUST BE HUNGRY.
NO. MOM JUST FED HER.
I THINK SHE JUST NEEDS A HUG FROM HER FAVORITE PERSON IN THE WORLD!
BUURRRP!
OR MAYBE SHE JUST HAD TO BURP.
YEAH, WELL, EITHER WAY THE HUG WORKED.

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, WHAT iF I set UP AN INQUiRY Booth FoR ALL THE DOUGHNUT DoGMA FoLLoWeRS oF THE WoRLD?
I'LL Be THE DOUGHNUT DoGMA MeNToR, ReADY To iNSPiRe AND BRiNG HoPe To ALL. I CAN See it NoW: THe PATH To eNLiGHteNMeNT is WitHiN ReACH.
Now How MANY DoUGHNUT DoGMA FoLLoWeRS Do You THiNK THeRe ARe? A tHoU-SAND? A MiLLioN? MAYBe eveN A BiLLioN?
THeRe'S two. Me AND You.
7/6/05

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a kind heart. You like to look at the positive side of things. Because you have charisma, people instantly like you. You have a strong devotion to family. Your personal determination helps you to achieve whatever you pursue. The coming year focuses on your closest partnerships and relationships.
Birthdate of: The Dalai Lama, spiritual leader of Tibet; George W. Bush, US president; Sylvester Stallone, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): New love and romance can come into your life now. At the very least, a new friendship will please you. You might meet someone from another culture.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a fabulous day to make real estate deals. It's also a good day to buy anything for your home. Whatever you do will promote the future wealth of your home.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is wonderful day to sign deals or have any kind of negotiations. Ditto for signing contracts. What you initiate now can only bring profits in the future.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is a wonderful day for business and commerce. It's also excellent for financial speculation. Shopping is favored as well. Whatever you buy will be a value.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You feel contented and benevolent toward others today. You're glad to be alive. You appreciate who you are and what you have. Life is good.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Solitude in beautiful surroundings appeals to you today. You feel a strong sense of appreciation for what you have. You see that what most enriches life can't be bought with money.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is a marvelous day to socialize with friends and groups. People feel warm-hearted and friendly. Furthermore, everyone is generous and open-hearted.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Financial enterprises look good today. In particular, those involving foreign investments, medicine and the law are especially favored. Talk to VIPs and bosses.

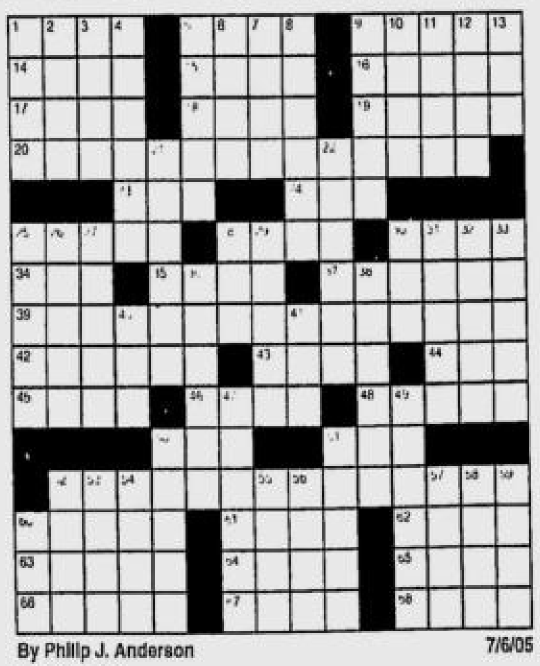
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Travel and educational plans have never looked better. Beautiful opportunities are falling right into your lap. Don't hesitate. Pick up the ball and run!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You can benefit from the wealth of others today. You could inherit something, receive gifts, get perks, have the use of other people's property or benefit through your partner.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This is a great day to get together with friends and have fun. You feel lighthearted. No one really wants to work today. This is a time for rest and relaxation.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): If you can discipline yourself to do any work today, you'll enjoy yourself. The truth is, however, nobody wants to work today—everybody wants to play! Nevertheless, cooperation with co-workers is pleasant and enjoyable.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR
7/6/05

ACROSS
1 Spoiled child
5 Pack tightly
9 Adder
14 Stir up
15 Patriot Nathan
16 Built like Humpty Dumpty
17 Nefarious
18 At all times
19 Poem division
20 Shopper's speed?
23 "__ Kapital"
24 Conger
25 Thin mortar
28 Poet Sandburg
30 Card game for three
34 Reed or Brock
35 Environmental sci.
37 Landed property
39 Sydney commuter's speed?
42 Dislike intensely
43 Unless, in law
44 Dance in France
45 Latin being
46 __-do-well
48 Sharif and Epps
50 Unhappy
51 One-time link
52 Fleeing felon's speed?
60 Data entry
61 Skirt length
62 Tom, Dick or Harry
63 Sky blue
64 Tavern orders
65 Alaska's first governor
66 Centering points
67 Dispatched
68 Long periods of time

DOWN
1 Rabbit's title
2 __ Ridge ('72 Derby winner)
3 Landed
4 Bornean carnivore
5 Cooks
6 Go ape
7 Writer Haley
8 Island near Seattle
9 Outspoken
10 Lendl or Pavlov
11 Twinge
12 Diminutive ending
13 Antique auto
21 Grade-B Westerns
22 Hunt and Reddy
25 Woods clearing
26 Libertines
27 Forces out
28 Row's opp.
29 Skirt shape
30 Orch. section
31 Shrine at Mecca
32 Doing battle
33 Blabs
36 Brief rest
38 Ohio tributary
40 Peg for a golfer
41 Ventilate
47 Botanical swellings
49 "The Avengers" star Patrick
50 Fills to excess
51 Social category
52 Automaker Ferrari
53 Tater
54 Make well
55 Loathsome
56 Earthly paradise
57 "Othello" villain
58 Fed. agent
59 Hankerings
60 Writer Fleming

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

S	O	A	K	■	S	A	L	A	D	■	T	A	S	S
O	B	I	L	■	A	D	A	N	O	■	E	X	E	C
W	I	L	L	Y	W	O	N	K	A	■	L	I	L	I
■	■	■	P	E	T	R	E	L	■	S	L	O	M	O
K	G	B	■	W	O	N	D	E	R	W	O	M	A	N
N	E	A	R	S	■	■	■	■	E	I	N	■	■	■
O	N	T	O	■	O	H	I	O	A	N	■	S	P	A
W	O	O	D	Y	W	O	O	D	P	E	C	K	E	R
N	A	N	■	E	N	S	U	E	S	■	R	U	S	E
■	■	■	S	S	E	■	■	■	■	C	O	L	O	N
W	I	C	K	E	D	W	I	T	C	H	■	L	S	T
A	S	H	E	S	■	A	L	E	R	O	S	■	■	■
S	L	E	W	■	W	H	I	T	E	W	H	A	L	E
P	E	R	E	■	B	O	A	R	S	■	E	B	A	Y
S	T	I	R	■	C	O	D	A	S	■	D	O	G	E

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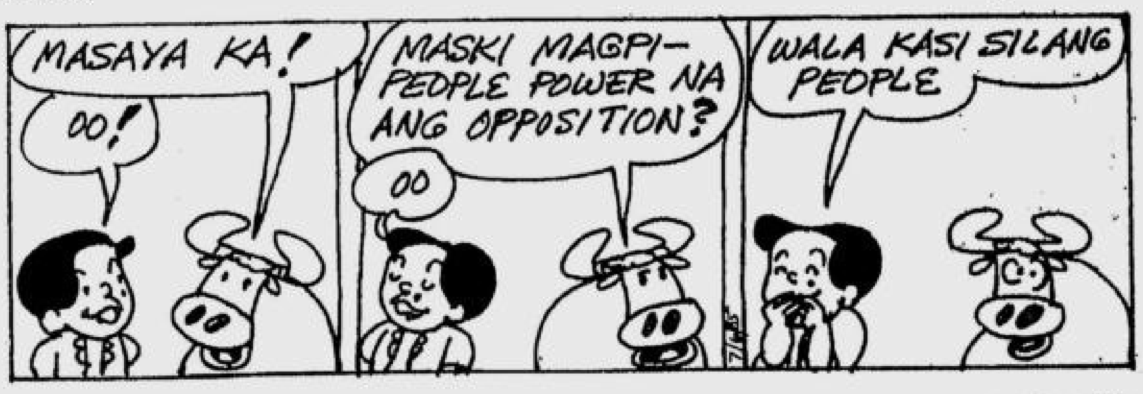
7/6/05

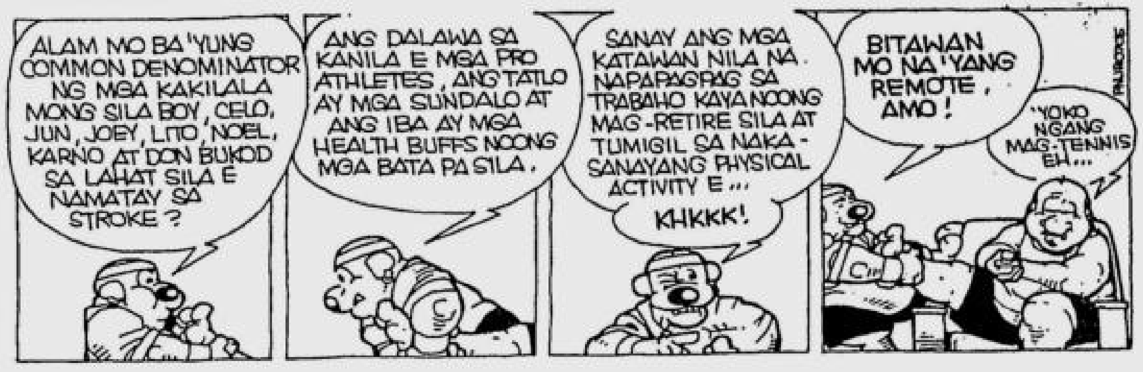
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MASAYA KA!
OO!
MASKI MAGPI-PEOPLE POWER NA ANG OPPOSITION?
OO
WALA KASI SILANG PEOPLE

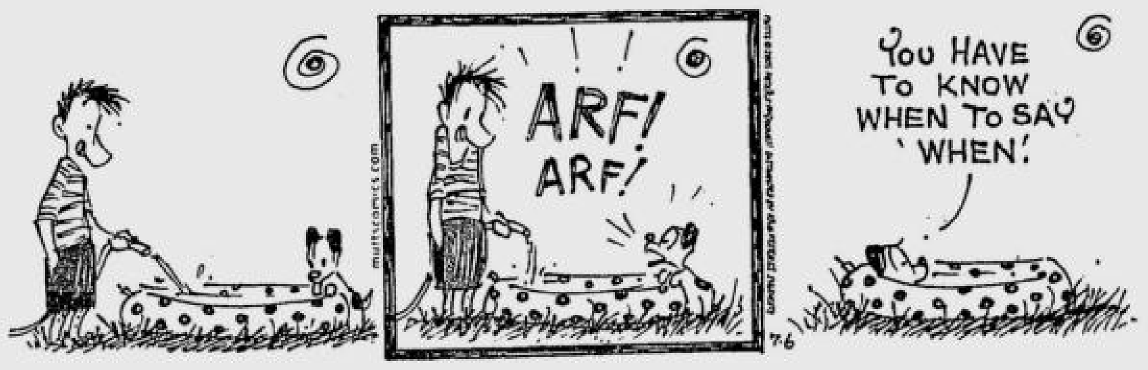
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ALAM MO BA 'YUNG COMMON DENOMINATOR NG MGA KAKILALA MONG SILA BOY, CELO, JUN, JOEY, LITO, NOEL, KARNO AT DON BUKOD SA LAHAT SILA E NAMATAY SA STROKE?
ANG DALAWA SA KANILA E MGA PRO ATHLETES, ANG TATLO AY MGA SUNDALO AT ANG IBA AY MGA HEALTH BUFFS NOONG MGA BATA PA SILA.
SANAY ANG MGA KATAWAN NILA NA NAPAPAGPAG SA TRABAHO KAYA NOONG MAG-RETIRE SILA AT TUMIGIL SA NAKA-SANAYANG PHYSICAL ACTIVITY E...
KHKKK!
BITAWAN MO NA 'YANG REMOTE, AMO!
'YOKO NGANG MAG-TENNIS EH...

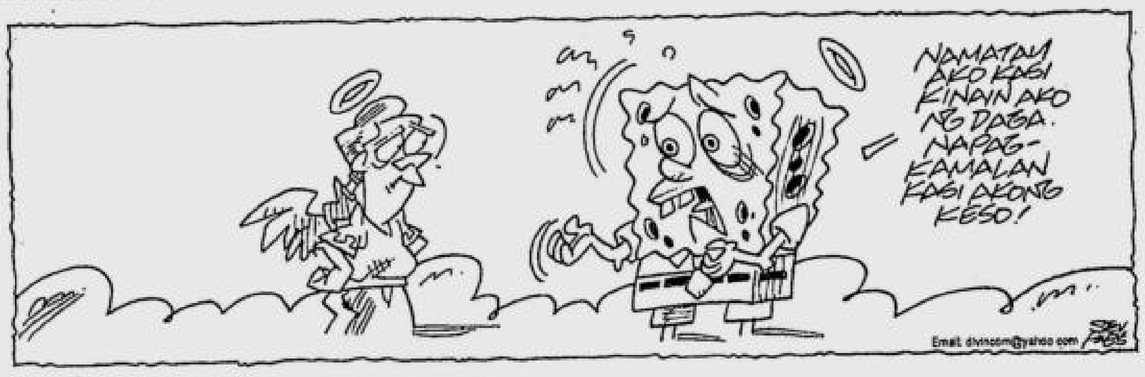
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


ARF! ARF!
YOU HAVE TO KNOW WHEN TO SAY 'WHEN'.
7-6

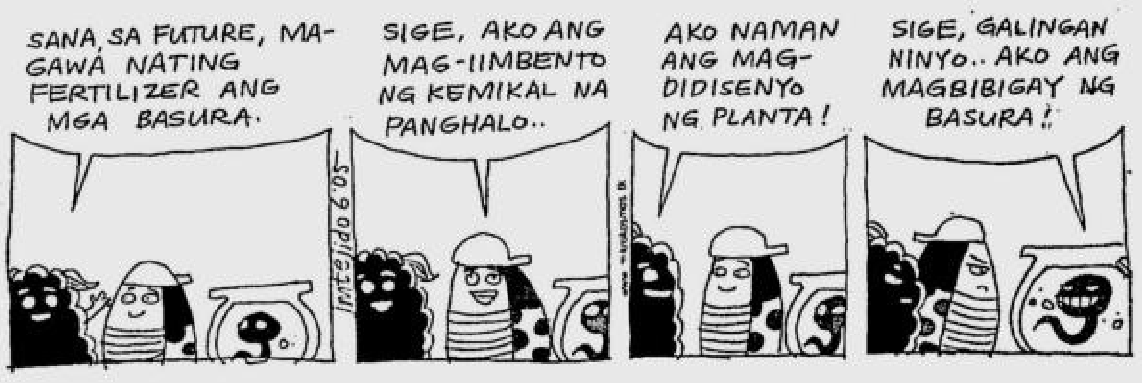
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


NAMATAY AKO KASI KINAIN AKO NG DAGA. NAPAG-KAMALAN KASI AKONG KESO!
Email: divincom@yahoo.com

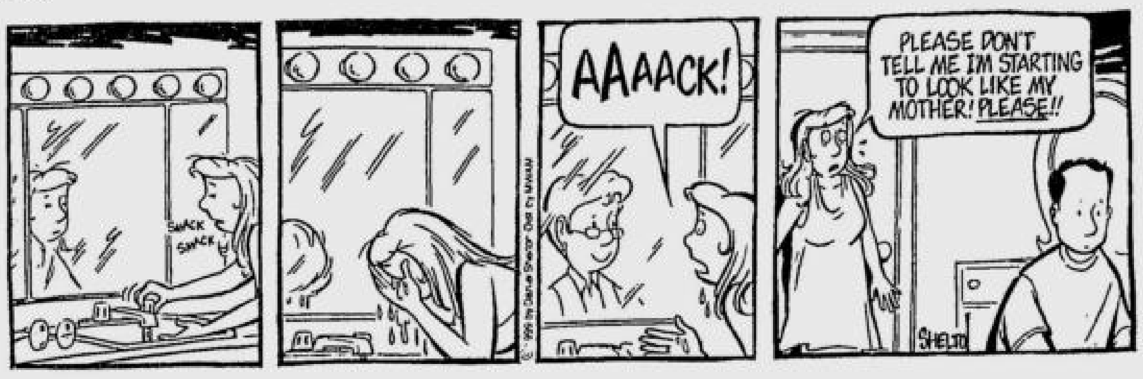
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


SANA, SA FUTURE, MA-GAWA NATING FERTILIZER ANG MGA BASURA.
SIGE, AKO ANG MAG-IIMBENTO NG KEMIKAL NA PANGHALO..
AKO NAMAN ANG MAG-DIDISENYO NG PLANTA!
SIGE, GALINGAN NINYO.. AKO ANG MAGBIBIGAY NG BASURA!
tejido 6.05

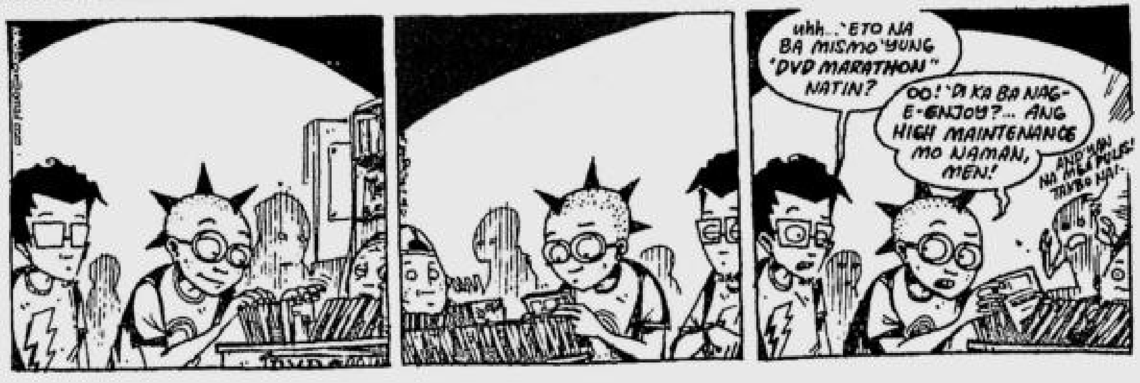
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


SMACK SMACK
AAAACK!
PLEASE DON'T TELL ME I'M STARTING TO LOOK LIKE MY MOTHER! PLEASE!!
SHELTON

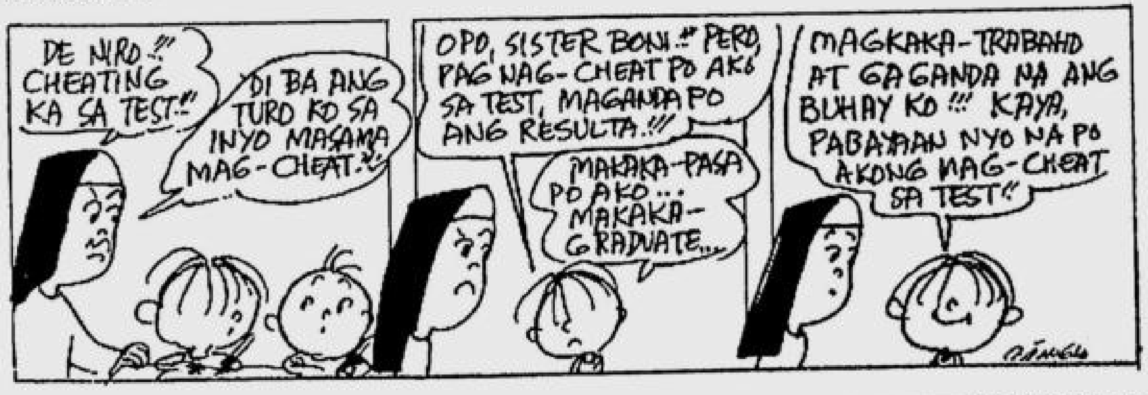
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


uhh...'ETO NA BA MISMO 'YUNG "DVD MARATHON" NATIN?
OO! 'DI KA BA NAG-E-ENJOY?... ANG HIGH MAINTENANCE MO NAMAN, MEN!

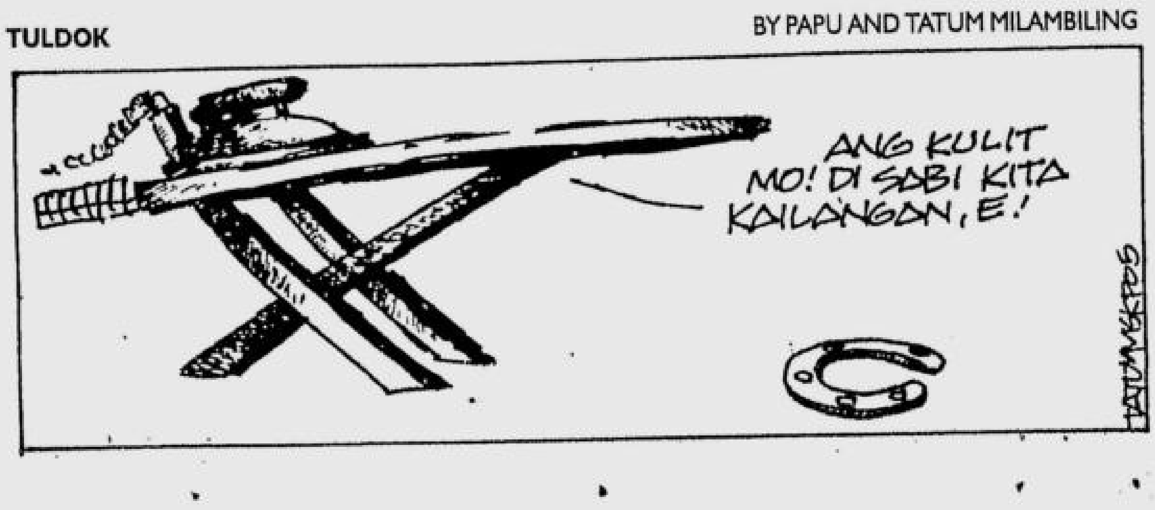
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


DE NIRO!!! CHEATING KA SA TEST!!!
DI BA ANG TURO KO SA INYO MASAMA MAG-CHEAT.!!
OPO, SISTER BONI!!! PERO, PAG NAG-CHEAT PO AKO SA TEST, MAGANDA PO ANG RESULTA!!!
MAKAKA-PASA PO AKO... MAKAKA-GRADUATE...
MAGKAKA-TRABAHO AT GAGANDA NA ANG BUHAY KO!!! KAYA, PABAYAAN NYO NA PO AKONG MAG-CHEAT SA TEST!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ANG KULIT MO! DI SABI KITA KAILANGAN, E!
TATUM&PAPU

THE AUTHOR with the U.R.S. & Inc. staff

The job: Shoe salesgirl

The good:

- The store's posh feel is relaxing.
- Fab co-workers! They easily made me feel comfortable.
- You get to be in the presence of shoes, shoes and shoes all the time.

The bad:

- Customers act like you're invisible.
- Things tend to be a bit slow during weekday mornings.
- You get to be in the presence of shoes, shoes and shoes all the time.

FIXING the shelves

It's shoe time

From page E1

who wanted to buy shoes for his girlfriend but wasn't sure what her size was (I must say he had good taste, though). There was that aww-inducing old couple who held hands while they looked around. Then there was the lady who went inside, circled the store three times, left, and came back after 10 minutes, again circling the store thrice, before finally declaring, "*Hindi pa 'ko maka*-choose eh."

Few smiles

Overall, the job wasn't as overwhelmingly difficult as I thought it would be, probably because shoe stores during peaceful weekdays are far less chaotic than the shoe sections of department stores during back-to-school, Christmas, or 50-percent-off sale seasons.

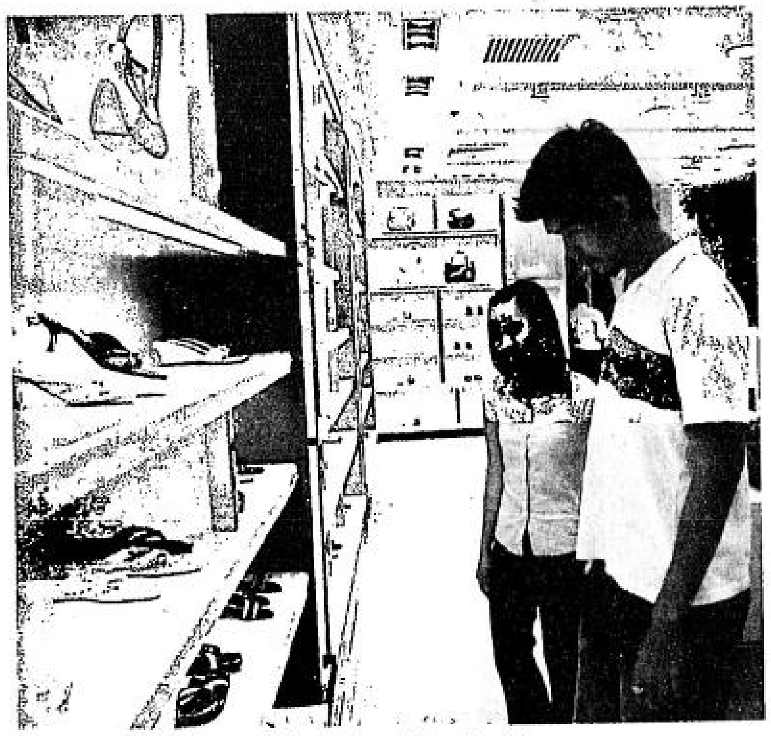
I found out a lot of things about Filipino customers, but what struck me most was that they seldom smiled back at salesladies, or returned a greeting, or said "thank you" before leaving. They rarely even bothered to say, "No, thanks, I'm just looking."

True, some salespeople can get quite annoying when they hover around you and act like all shoppers are potential kleptos, but most customers tend to forget the rules of common courtesy as well. I don't want this to sound like a terribly overused, "if-only-we-were-nicer-to-each-other-the-world-would-be-a-much-better-place" line, but you can't deny the fact that we could all use a good dose of respect for the people who work their butts off just to make shopping a pleasant experience for us.

So, yeah, I guess I'll have to give in to a grand old cliché ending. Being a shoe salesgirl for a day helped me learn to appreciate shoe salesgirls more. And yes, I lasted way more than 30 minutes. Ha.

U.R.S. & Inc. products are also available at Rustan's Shangri-la and Sole & Co. at Eastwood and Power Plant Mall.

E-mail the author at muyacaramella@yahoo.com



HELPING customers pick out the right pair of shoes

TAAL VISTA HOTEL
The view is just the beginning.

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ENJOY great shopping in Hong Kong.

We have finalists!

FOR WEEKS you sent in your entries in the desire to be chosen as the Philippine representative to the 2005 Hong Kong Shopper of the Year Contest.

Now, we have the five finalists.

Karen T. Torres from Angeles, Pampanga, Maria Ceylnna V. Gimenez from Las Pinas City, Benjamin Arteficio from Makati City, Catherine Avenido from Pasig City and Aina Cruz from Parañaque City.

These finalists will battle it out in a mini shopping contest this weekend.

The grand prize winner from the Philippines will compete with the experienced shoppers from 17 other countries for the Shopper of the Year 2005 title.

Who among the five chosen ones will emerge victorious and raring to compete? Will team Philippines finally take home the much-coveted title and fabulous, to-die-for prizes this year?

The international competition themed "Discover the Shopping Fun in Hong Kong" will be on July 19 at Lan Kwai Fong in Hong Kong. Contestants from Australia, Canada, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, UK, USA, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Mainland China, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand will be given a Shopping Info Pack and HK$3,000 as shopping money. Each team will be required to purchase one item from four categories—Fashion and Beauty, Jewellery & Watches, Consumer Electronics and Chinese Traditions—within a specific time frame. Contestants will present their purchases to judges on July 20. Prizes will be awarded on that same day.

To find out more about the 2005 Hong Kong shopping Festival, log on to www.DiscoverHongKong.com

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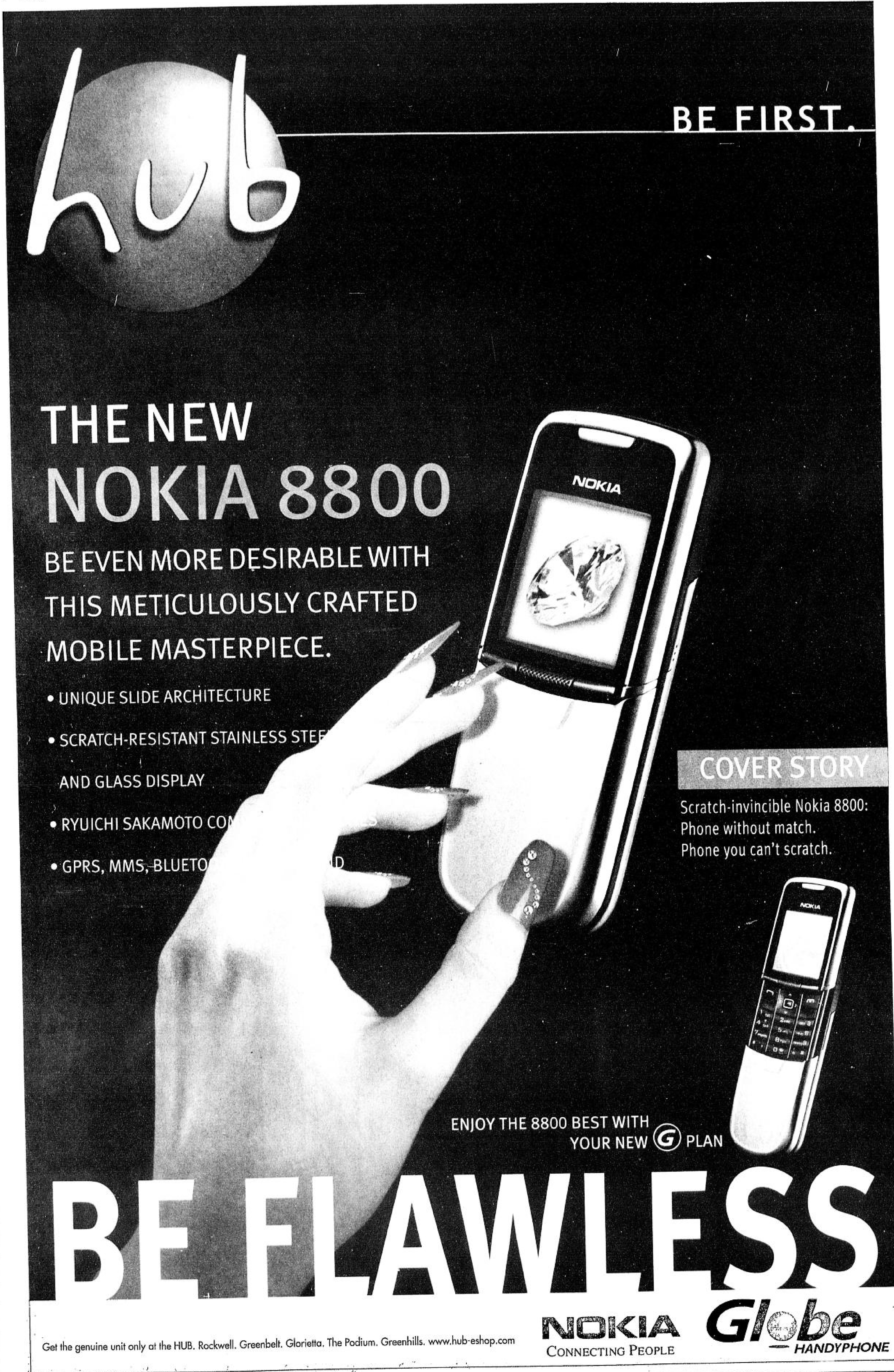

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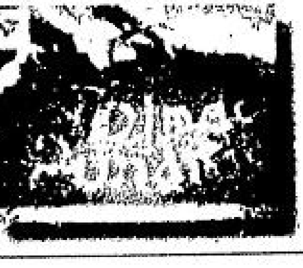

WIN this Gintong Aklat today!

Kuwento ni Jose Miguel Tejido
Inilathala ng Adarna House, Inc

July 6, 2005 Today's Question:
Which award-winning book was written by Edgar Reyes?
A. *Kung Wala na ang Tag-Araw* B. *Etsa-Puwera* C. *Laro sa Baga*

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Text answer as follows:Text NBDB<space>answer and send to 283 for Smart/Talk 'N Text/Addict Mobile and 2378 for Globe/Touch Mobile.

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06-30-05 Winner
Jea Aspree
10 Langka St., Golden Acres, Las Piñas, M.M.

07-04-05 Answer: B
Epifanio Matute wrote *Kuwentong Kutsero*

07-05-05 Answer: A
Resil Mojares wrote *Waiting for Manang Mailing*

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